

Master 191

Chapter 191 - 191. Curse

"Gil, what do you see there? Walker stopped slowly trying not to draw too much attention. The rest stopped with him looking at him curiously.

Gill made small glances while pointing around at the other stalls not to draw attention, he had started to notice what Walker was feeling. His sharp eyes were zeroing in on things that were just not exactly right. "That frail short girl in the turban with green hair poking out is limping. She has bandages on her arms under those long purple sleeves. Her clothing is definitely much too old and small for her. She is also sweating a lot, she does not seem very healthy at all." Gil was becoming more and more tense as he watched the girl move more. It was obvious to him that she had many injuries and was not eating properly. On top of all this was the man in the middle.

"That man sitting in the middle is wearing much nicer clothing, his face and hair do not match a single bit of the girl, they can't be related in any way. He is also very clean and has no visible injuries. Well actually I think his knuckles are a bit red." the last bit was almost a growl for Gil, he had started to put some things together that he absolutely did not want to see. The man was wearing the same purple long sleeved shirt and purple pants that the girl was but his were completely spotless and brand new. He breathed easy and didn't lift a finger to any customer allowing it all to be handled by the girl. Walker was almost certain the girl would pass out soon.

"Leader, this can not be normal, how can someone allow this to happen?" Su was too pure to accept that this kind of thing could exist.

Gil was twitching his hand slightly almost as if he was imagining grabbing his bow. "Calm down and breath Gil, we will do something about this." Walker explained the possible connection in what Gil saw so that Onyx and Midnight could understand. Su had already grasped it and Like Gil Remey's anger was growing. "It looks like that man has been beating the girl and forcing all the work on her. We don't have proof yet but we can see it from the way their bodies are injured. Something still feels off though...ah! I can't see any animal or monster-like traits on them. I wonder if they actually demi-humans." Walker tried to look harder and so did Gil but after a few more moments confirmed that they showed no signs of being demi-humans at all.

"We should just go and force him to admit it, if anyone hurt my brothers or sisters like that I would end them." Remey was imagining the girl as her family back at the orphanage and it was causing her to become a bit unstable.

"Like I said we will do something, let me use my appraisal skill. Maybe we can find something to ask the man to get him started talking. We can get him to accidentally spill the details of what he has been doing. Once we do that we can get the guards to properly arrest him, even though we are in another country we all know that injuries like hers are not from training at all." while the demi-human kingdom strongly encouraged training at a young age, they did have limits. They would never risk the health and future of a child that could grow in to a very powerful warrior.

Walker focused on a pendant in the shape of an eye to try and dig up a good reason to ask the man some questions. Activating his all around appraisal skill yielded more than he expected.

' Cursed eye of the abyss

Increases affinity for darkness at the cost of sanity. Was forged by a blacksmith who had been driven insane after spending years alone crafting in the darkness.'

Walker's jaw dropped, the others just looked at him like he had started to lose his mind. Why would he be making such a face now? "Brother, sister, and I are becoming worried about you,"

Onyx did not like that Walker seemed to be stuck. He was always thinking and trying to make sense of things but at this moment there was nothing visible.

Walker was furiously using his appraisal skill,

' Cursed gem of ice

+10matk

Created from the blood of one hundred snow imps and frozen by the coldest night of winter. Cursed by the hex touch of the demon Vincent.

Cursed staff of flames

Allows stronger fire attacks. Special attack blue flame wall is able to be learned through in depth study of the staff's innate affinity. Cursed by the demon Vincent's hex touch to cause the same damage to the user as it causes to the opponent.

Cursed glass of poison

A normal glass cursed by the demon Vincent's hex touch to store a mana eating poison on its surface at all times. Any liquid placed inside becomes laced with poison.

Cursed....

Cursed...

Cursed...

Cursed by...

Cursed....

Cursed by'

Every item on the tables was either cursed or had been cursed by this demon named Vincent's cursed touch. Walker couldn't fathom how so many cursed items in one place were even possible, how dangerous was everything here. Each and every item was enough to kill its own user or put them on the path to kill others and themselves. "We need to do something as soon as possible." Walker finally moved his mouth in a stunned whisper. Everyone heard it as they were hyper focused on what he was doing due to his strange actions. "We may need the guards, as soon as possible..." Walker wasn't sure they should approach the man anymore.

'Chain quest: Justice for Ordist

The party has discovered the dastardly culprit behind multiple plans to weaken the kingdom of Ordist. This demon has caused many deaths and much suffering.

Requirement:

Shut down the sale of cursed objects.

Reward:

100exp

Requirement:

Pursue the target and rescue the unnamed girl.

Reward:

300exp

Requirement: optional

assist the guards to capture the demon Vincent

Reward:

600exp

Requirement: optional

Defeat the demon Vincent

Reward:

400exp.

Time is limited. The party must act before the criminal flees the city.

Punishment:

Loss of five levels'

Every member of the party felt that their heart had stopped and they may die. Not only was this a chain quest to shut down a cursed item merchant but also to subdue a demon? They even had to rescue the girl with the demon. Even more terrifying was that although this quest had amazing rewards it also came with a failure penalty, they could lose five levels, this was unheard of in any situation. The system was basically forcing them to act, Walker was certain this was another effect from the hero title. "Remey go find the guards and show them your travel medal, tell them we found someone selling cursed items and that they are most likely a demon. Gil keep back and focus your eyes on the slightest movement, if anything happens we are counting on you. Onyx, Midnight, stay far enough away as not to be caught up in anything but close enough to come to support it. Su, you and I are going to go have a word to keep him distracted while we wait for the guards," Remey had already started off before Walker finished, she had read the quest and knew just how dangerous things would be, this was their first run in with a demon. Unfortunately, their sightseeing was cut short, they had all hoped that they would not be targeted by a demon or even run in to it in the first place but it seemed the hero title was pushing their fate in a different direction.

Gil had blended in to the crowd hiding himself from view, Walker couldn't spot him but felt his eyes watching. Midnight and Onyx seemed to have disappeared in to the shadows, Midnight was using her skill shadow wrapping to blend in the shifting shadows of those on the street. With all of the movement it would be nearly impossible to pick out midnight as the shadows she wrapped herself with moved with her.

Walker gave Su a look, he really did not want to move any closer to the chaos that was sure to ensue after they interrupted the attempts to sell the items. The girl quickly zeroed in on the two approaching.

"Hi there, welcome to our little stall, we have plenty to choose from. How about this stone pendant for the lady, not only will it increase her looks but it will also make her defense stronger. Maybe you fancy the swords we have? You can give them a swing, we promise you may even like one so much you can't put it down!" The girl was using all her energy to try and push for the sale. Walker could feel his heart breaking as he knew she was most likely pushing through tremendous pain to do so.

Chapter 192 - 192. Vincent

Walker put on his best smile after hearing the girl use her first sales pitch. He wanted the attention on him and not attracting more customers. "Well I have got to say, you are an excellent sales woman. But i am not sure what you may have that i can use. Your variety is just so large. My girlfriend and I are just too torn, we wish we could buy them all." Walker laughed loudly making sure his show was convincing. Even Su leaned in to him a bit to try and pull off the act. There was still no reaction from the man sitting but the girl seemed to jump on the act full force.

She practically dragged them to a table full of gems and jewelry pushing them to pick up and examine them in different ways. Walker knew they should not touch a single thing or else they would end up with a cursed gear potentially stuck to them for life. There were those that possessed some purification skills but those often required extremely rare items or high amounts of gold to pay the person. Some purification skills were even said to shave away the life of the user to break a curse. "What can you tell me about this blue chain necklace here? It looks foreign I wonder about its history." The girl immediately searched the table for the one Walker was talking about obviously having trouble, He had actually motioned toward a green one but said blue to slow her down.

"Honey you know blue clashes with me gear, what about the maroon one?" Su played along motioning to a pink gem calling it maroon, the girl was slightly panicking not being able to find what they were talking about.

Walker waited a moment looking expectantly which made the girl even more flushed, " Well I'm not sure this girl can help us, she seems not to know what she is even selling. We are better off going elsewhere." Walker started to pull Sui away by the arm which caused a look of sheer terror from the girl. She was staring at the man completely afraid of the consequences of losing the sale.

"Ahh young man, you seem to have asked a question to a novice, let a master help you out." The man's eyes had opened, they were a yellow color that seemed to pierce through the spirit. "So you wished to know the history of the blue and maroon ones? Let me see" The man had stood up a bit too fast for comfort but Walker and u held their ground. Walker could feel Su tensing, waiting to block any potential attacks.

Walker wanted to avoid fighting in such a crowded market, if any went awry it could harm or kill someone. Even more so without the guards there they could let the man escape, Walker was also watching the man carefully. He lifted the blue necklace up delicately, "This was made by a traveling gem carver, he spent hours carving every single loop in the chain here. He placed such great care in to his craft he procured the materials through any means. This is definitely a wonderful piece that boasts boosted defense from water elemental oriented attacks." The man placed the necklace down and picked up the one with the pink gem. "This is rather different, the quality of the chain is almost nothing but the pink gem here is only formed under very high temperatures. The adventurer that traveled to obtain this was said to have defeated a whole pride of red mane lions. This gem can improve the strength of the fire elemental s you may use." The man placed it down in to its place. Walker tried to look pensive as he wanted them so seem like he was unsure of what would be the best to buy.

Taking advantage of his chance to think Walker used his appraisal skill on the man, wanting to know a bit more about what to expect.

' Vincent

Demon

Level 26

Witch doctor system

Loves watching their cursed items cause general mayhem to innocents. His favorite activity is torturing those under them in the demon ranks. Loyally follows the orders of a greater demon. Has experimented with their hex touch ability to curse items, potions, people, and even buildings.'

Walker pretended he was looking at his own stats to decide whether he should purchase one but had actually read the disturbing information in the appraisal. This was the very demon they needed to help the guards capture. Even more one of his favorite pastimes was torturing those under him, this completely explained why the girl with him was so injured. The truly striking part was that this demon's hex touch worked on many things but most importantly potions. They didn't even need to pursue the person who had caused such trouble with poisoned potions since the demon here was most likely the culprit.

Walker was about to ask about another accessory on the table but heard the approach of footsteps. Guards had started a walk down the middle of the road, there were easily forty of them in four lines making way. The girl was visibly agitated by this, however the man seemed completely unfazed choosing instead to smile at the pair waiting for the next question. Walker pretended to get a better look at one of the rings on the table moving himself closer to the girl so that he could pull her away when the guards got close enough. Vincent stayed calm but his eyes told Walker that he was unhappy with the way he had moved.

The guards found them very quickly and moved in to a half circle formation blocking all methods of escape on the ground. "Damn it, Brat use that spell and hide me!" Vincent dropped his calm facade screaming at the girl to use . She crouched in terror with her hands out, a wave of light flew from her hands engulfing Vincent. Once the light had faded there was no Vincent in sight. The guards that had mobilized were marching forward to close the gap not at all relaxing since their target had just vanished. There was a slight jungle from the farthest table that caught Walkers attention, It had also caught Gil's eye.

An arrow appeared out of nowhere stuck in the air, drops of red blood dripped from it along with the sounds of grunting. The arrow had struck someone they couldn't see! The spell the girl had just used bent the light around Vincent making him invisible. With the damage the spell began to fade exposing the extremely angry Vincent.

"You worthless brats, how dare you harm me!" Vincent jumped forward to grab a hold of Walker trying to land his hex touch skill on him, however Su was there with her shield already. Vincent's hand landed on her shield completely. There was a dark puff of smoke as a strange pattern formed on the shield. "Worthless girl, out of my way" Vincent kicked Su's shield away trying to get by, his anger clouding his vision. To everyone's surprise Su's shield crumpled like rusted metal. The shield that had protected her for so long was nothing but dust, Walker could only pray that Vincent didn't use any more curses on them. If one were to land on their body the results could be horrendous. Luckily when Vincent was about to push past Su and touch her a vicious growl came from behind him. Midnight had snuck up and was already rending her claws across his back.

"Onyx do not touch him, Midnight retreat, if he touches you he can curse you." The headed Walkers words and retreated, Onyx had just been about to use his bind skill to trap Vincent. With his turban sliced and his clothing as well two black horns were visible on his head. They may have been small but showed his race clearly. His back there was a bat like wing under his clothing that had been covered with bandages in an attempt to hide them. He could not deny he was a demon nor could he escape at the moment.

More guards with wings seemed to be filling the air above having taken more time to arrive. Remey was sprinting up behind the gorilla like guards, she had a worried expression on her face but seeing that all the help she had notified had already arrived she held a victorious pose.

Walker pulled his staff from his inventory while Su backed away pulling the girl with her. "The system was notifying him that they had shut down the sale of the cursed items due to the guards appearance and their evacuation of the citizens. Walker was now waiting for the system to notify him that the girl was safe, Su just needed to get her behind the guards. "How dare you ruin my fun! My lord sent me to do a job and i swore I would complete it even at the cost of my Life!"

Chapter 193 - 193. Capture

Vincent began to gather a dark energy around his hands as he raised them, the power behind it must be a mastery skill. Walker braced himself unsure if he could stop this. Walker released a fire bolt at Vincent but it somehow curved around him and was blasted in to the ground. Seeing that his attack had failed Walker sent two more trying to stop him from using whatever dangerous skill he was gathering but instead the fire bolts were again deflected.

"I curse this very land with my own blood. Let my soul be burned to bring retributions on those who mock my might." The dark aura converted on his hand and he started to slam it downwards. The guards on the ground had picked up pace to rush in to stop him at all costs. The system rang in Walkers ears notifying him that the girl had been saved by Su. This was all seemingly falling in to a chaotic state and Vincent's hand was now inches from the ground, massive gusts of wind pushed them all causing Walker to close his eyes.

The sound of something falling to the ground with a thud and the screaming of Vincent filled the streets. There was blood pouring from where his arm was just moments ago. The arm in question was on the ground starting to fall in to a rotten mass of flesh. The curse he had just attempted to perform had backfired in his failing to complete it and the rebound destroyed it. The fact that someone had severed his arm was a blessing. With even more gusting winds a familiar person had shown up in front of Vincent.

The general Scylla was there, her fan radiating extremely potent wind mana, she had sent a wind blade through the space between them while on her way here to stop Vincent. She had been notified shortly after the guards had been and knew that she would be needed if the report was true. She was much more inclined to believe it hearing it came from one of those that had participated in the tournament just the day before. From their actions she had seen the true spirit they possessed and felt they would not lie about something so serious. On top of that she had also heard the gossip of the hero title.

"You pathetic demon wished to breed harm and misfortune on my side of the city, how dare you. May your soul never find rest in the afterlife." Scylla raised her fan at the struggling Vincent fully intent on killing him.

"Wait lady Scylla!" Walker shouted for her attention while also using Light heal on Vincent to slow the blood loss. "He is terrible indeed but he can tell us more about why he was sent here and what else he has sold. Every item here is cursed by him. We need to save those who have unknowingly taken them.

His words did not seem to register but after a few seconds Scylla lowered her fan, "You are wise but soft boy." her whisper was almost too quiet to hear but nonetheless Walker still understood it. He bowed his head as Scylla glared at Vincent who had passed out from , she raised her flowing clothing slightly and a snakelike creature slithered out, it seemed to have fins and Gil's. "My baby leviathan is fairly resistant to so I will have it restrain this trash and take it directly to King Rorick. The guards will confiscate these items. What of that girl with him?" She appeared to want to take the girl as well. "She must be a demon as well, another piece of trash."

"Lady Scylla please allow my party to deal with her, I was able to gather some information that she was a toy for Vincent. He tortured her and severely injured her. She doesn't even have a name." Scylla's face softened just a bit, she had once been the very same, she knew very well that the weaker demons were the same if not treated worse than the slaves.

"You may take her, be sure to ask her as many questions as possible, send the information directly to me." With this the baby leviathan had fully entangled Vincent, Scylla grabbed a hold of its frilled tail pulling in up off the ground. With more wind she was long gone from sight, Walker could not imagine how strong she was and promised himself not to use his appraisal skill on her for fear of seeing something insane.

The guards had stopped their motions intently listening to what Scylla was saying, after her departure they formed smaller teams and carefully began to break down the shop. Some would exclaim that they needed another pair of gauntlets as they would become damaged after touching certain items. Walker couldn't watch them do this over and over knowing that each and every item on the tables was a potential life lost.

Su was a small distance off by a temporarily abandoned fruit stand trying to get the girl to relax, there were tears in the girls eyes. She was shaking all over her nails biting in to her arms. This was not something that she should be involved in at such a young age. Walker was not excited in any sense to have to try and ask her questions about how she got here and what she had been doing. He could not imagine what terrible things had occurred for her to fall under such a terrible person in her young age.

Walker met them and placed his hand on her head while kneeling down to her level. He used his light heal skill over and over watching as bruises faded and the bags under the girls eyes faded. He had spent most of his mana just on this finding that her injuries were much worse than he had expected. "Can you show me those bandages on your arms please? Walker used the same voice he had once used to soothe Lisa when she had been frightened by her first thunderstorm. The situation may be different but the soothing intention was the same to a child. The girl was shaking just a bit less and was able to understand Walker was not about to hurt her after feeling his healing skill. While he removed the dirty bandages revealing scars upon scars Walker continued to speak, "That you used was very amazing, I have never seen someone use light to make someone invisible. You are very talented." His words were soft and calm which set the mood for the girl to slow her breathing and relax. "Su can you please get Remey, I am sure she would love to meet someone new, You know you are just the same age of Remey's younger brothers and sisters." Walker rambled on about Remey growing up in an orphanage and taking care of all her siblings. This seemed to calm the girl even more but she was far from relaxed.

Remey came over easily, "I can't believe Scylla stopped that evil guy, I was ready to give him a face full of fist." She was finishing up her conversation with Su when she saw the state of the girl Walker was talking to and immediately jumped in to big sister mode. With Remey now fully caring for the girl, Walker motioned for Onyx and Midnight to come over. They stayed away from the girl as not to scare her more, Gil made his way over as well. "Gil I have no idea how you landed that arrow but it was perfect." Clapping Gil on the back, Gil showed a slightly embarrassed look.

"Well when that light flashed around I had no idea where he went, but when I saw the table corner move I figured something was off so I shot an arrow at the spot I thought was weird. Lucky me my arrow got stuck in the air. Who would have thought light could make someone invisible. It is weird though, a demon bringing around a girl who had light, I thought demons hated light." Gil was right, there were plenty of stories that spoke about how much demons disliked light since their culture held dark elemental in high esteem.

Midnight and Onyx were looking at Walker expectantly they definitely wanted some praise after following his commands to retreat after the attack. "You two did well, I am glad he didn't get his hands on either of you, he could place a curse on someone with a touch. I feel bad for Su's shield, it fell to dust." Walker and Gil looked off to the pile of rusty dust on the ground, that shield had protected all of them for a long time now, it had even been modified with dragon scale but it still didn't withstand the hex touch of Vincent.

The guards had begun to carefully escort crates filled with the cursed items away, any citizen around was kept away due to the danger. They seemed well experienced in such matters and most likely gained these skills from their time guarding the markets. Seeing that things were handled Walker wanted to

encourage them to move to the tamers guild so they could get a handle on what happened and make the girl more relaxed away from the streets that would soon be crowded again.

Chapter 194 - 194. Making Sense

Heading back to the tamers guild, Remey took the responsibility to carry the girl who had now fallen in to a stress induced sleep. Walker was worried that there was more than just serious emotional trauma, but possibly a curse left over from Vincent.

' unnamed girl

Demon race

Level 6

Light benders system

Forced out of her home due to her system based on the light element. Passed around as a useless servant until she unlocked the light bending ability allowing temporary invisibility. Taken in by Vincent and used to cause constant suffering, many emotional and physical scars were created. Surviving many curses under the torment of Vincent but currently is free of any curse.'

Walker was able to breathe a sigh of relief seeing that the girl was not currently cursed, he would have had to do everything in his power to learn a purification skill to free her. He tried not to dwell on the horrid treatment she had to go through since she unlocked her system, it may be the way the society in the demon kingdom worked but it was still wrong in his eyes. Everyone had worth and did not deserve such hate.

Using the system he checked the quest rewards wanting to see the total of experience they had all received.

'Chain quest: Justice for Ordist completed

Requirement :

shut down the sale of cursed objects

Reward:

100 exp multiplied to 1000 exp

Requirement:

Pursue the target and rescue the unnamed girl

Reward:

300 exp multiplied to 3000 exp

requirement : optional

Defeat the demon Vincent

Reward:

None

Requirement: Optional

Assist the guards to capture the Demon Vincent

Reward:

600exp multiplied to 6000exp."

This all came together to ten thousand experiences, it was a major contribution to their growth. The had gained much more than usual from these quests making Walker believe that the bigger the heroic action the bigger the reward, This was plain in the choice to subdue Vincent and not defeat him. Walker was itching to look and see what levels they were but stopped himself. The party needed to get their rescued friend somewhere safe and speak to the tamer's guild master about what to do now. Things were definitely going to escalate.

The moment they were seen by the tamers watching the fence it began to lower, Laurence and Ribbolt were standing there dead silent. Walker knew there was a lot to talk about, Robbolt headed towards his office with Walker in tow. Walker gave a nod to the others to head to the resting quarters with the girl so that she could rest and they could take some time to make sense of what just happened.

After taking a seat at the coffee table in Ribolt's office the first thing out of Laurence and Ribbolt's mouth was, "What the hell happened!"

With a bit of a sigh Walker told them every detail starting with the tournament the day before. From there he went on to explain that they denied their escort from king Rorick and even tried to use themselves as bait. Their plan naturally did not work but they instead were unintentionally guided to the merchant selling strange items by the adventures guild within the city. This all added up to both a lucky and unlucky discovery. It was true that the party had saved many more demi-humans from cursed items, and death. However they had also gone up against an opponent whose skills could literally curse them to turn to dust. This thought still made Walker shiver as he told them. Seeing that Walker understood the danger that the party had been on either Laurence nor Ribbolt reprimanded him.

"So now they have their culprit, I am not sure if this is good or bad. If they execute that demon the hate for demons will only grow more. And if they manage to get him to spill the names of his leaders then they could go after the demon kingdom. However if they are wise they will only punish the one demon and pursue more political avenues. War would not be good for any kingdom on the continent." Ribbolt knew more than anyone how war could severely harm the guild and people in the continent. The loss of safe travel would cripple any adventurer, tamer, merchant, and even public relations. The stress of war would breed a whole different generation full of hate.

Walker understood what Ribbolt was thinking and was also having his own silent prayers that war would be avoidable. If they could just find a peaceful resolution for the demons and the demi-humans maybe years of bad blood could be washed away.

"Why would the demons send someone to poison the populace and curse them now? It seems too random." Laurence had made a good point, one well worth investigating more.

"That is what I have been wondering for a while. If they wanted to do something big against the kingdom to weaken them this would be it. But to what end?" Walker was not well traveled enough to fully understand the relations all the kingdoms had, the only one he really knew was the demi-human and human kingdom. The Crystal kingdom and the Kingdom of Ordist had long shared trade, food from Ordist and manufactured goods from Crystal. This was a nice balance and they saw each other as equals.

"I can lend some wisdom to this, long ago the demons played a trick on the tribes of the demi-humans to get some of their land. This made the demi-humans angry and they tried to fight the demons to get it back. As you can imagine it was a physical attacker against a al attacker. The demi-humans suffered huge losses and the demons were in turn overwhelmed by the sheer numbers of the demi-humans. Both races nearly brought each other to extinction. The demons speak of a deal that the demi-humans made and went back on. This has fueled the conflict between the two for a long time. It doesn't help that both races are stubborn and prideful, it really makes things harder." Ribbolt had often dealt with the stress between the two nations, it was rare for tamers to need to travel in the land occupied by the demons but when they did it was very dangerous. He had gained quite a few wrinkles on his face trying to mediate some problems during the border crossings.

"Walker, I think the real question you need to ask yourself at the moment is what will happen to the girl your party rescued? She is a demon right? If she stays here she will be treated just as poorly as in the demon's territory." Laurence brought up a good point, one that Walker was thinking about just now.

"She has no home with the demons, and she can't make a home here. She may as well just come with us back to Diamond. My party has a huge mansion with plenty of space. Demons may rarely come to our kingdom but I can't say there is an overall hate like here. Maybe she will be able to find a good place for herself, I know some people who use light too." Walker was thinking that the girl would fit in at the cathedral, she may not necessarily be a healer but if she used light maybe she would be welcomed anyways. From what he remembered growing up people did not necessarily hate the demon race but the stories they heard had definitely put them off. This could be a good way to start a better relationship. If the demi-humans started a war with the demons it was safe to say that Walker's kingdom would end up involved in some way. He may be able to convince the king to act as a stopgap between the two and clear things up. Walker's mind was flooded with all these things he had never once been part of, it was overwhelming.

"Then i recommend you all head out soon, with today's incident i am sure things will escalate here, you are all bound to be dragged in to more drama the longer you stay. You've already seen the King's sly

tricks with his tournament. You didn't think it was actually a tradition did you?" Walker had wondered but in the end just went with the flow.

"I did think it was too convenient, but it was a good way for us to build up some respect with the kingdom as a whole. I hope it worked, We will need as much respect and credibility as possible if we get involved even more than we are now." Things may not be rushed in to war any second because the political aspect of leaders would drag things out, but that did not change the amount of pressure Walker felt. He, like most people did not want to see anyone hurt or die, no matter the race and kingdom. "I'm going to head over to where everyone else is, we told Scylla that we would gather some information from the girl to give here, once that is done we can get ready for the journey back.

Chapter 195 - 195. Keeping The Deal

Walker was about to leave when he remembered something, "Hey Laurence since nobody else is around this may be the best time to give you half of what we found from that quest." For only a moment Laurence seemed confused.

"That quest? You mean the one that makes things very risky for us because of the value?"

"Yes THAT one. We did promise to split it half and half." Ribbolt had been told of the quest to slay the wolves but Laurence had purposefully kept the items they found hidden so that things could remain hidden and safe longer.

Walker pulled the overfilled backpack out of his storage and let it fall to the coffee table with a hard thwack. The orichalcum ore on the inside bounced together making Ribbolt wonder why a seemingly rock filled backpack was so important. Walker opened the top and pulled out half the ore leaving it in a pile on the table, then quickly stored the bag away again.

"This is...Where!" This was less of a question and more of an order from Ribbolt. Laurence was pale knowing that if he was not very careful with his response he would be severely punished.

"The quest to slay those wolves was because they had harmed and destroyed a merchant carriage. The reward was that we could take the remaining items, we told you about the mana crystals but omitted the backpack that the quest issuer definitely did not know about. I told Walker to keep it all but he made a deal with me to split it. Now that we have done so our deal is complete." Laurence was not taking his eyes off the pile of Orichalcum ore on the table afraid that they may run away themselves.

"HMM you are all way too lucky, are you sure your party doesn't have a gambler in your midst?" Ribbolt could not fathom just how insane this amount of luck was. This was one of the rarest ores and Walker had just placed half of what they found on the table. They could easily have sold it all for thousands of gold. They could even make some of the best equipment too, only a small amount was needed to greatly increase the qualities of anything crafted with it.

While Ribbolt made sense of what was sitting in front of him Walker was realizing that if he was able to get the forge at the mansion running and Midnight could level up to the point where she could add her dragon fire to the flames then just maybe they could forge Su new shield with some of this ore. This would fix a bunch of current problems they had and also greatly strengthen them. However first things first, find Su a temporary shield for the trip home.

Speaking of the trip home he would also need to consider the fact that they would now be bringing along an extra person who would need protecting. The odds were that Remy would handle the majority of the protecting since she had the most experience with younger children, even more so since she had the offensive and defensive ability to block most of the snow imps or ice wraiths attacks.

"You've given out tamers guild such an impressive amount of orichalcum ore, you had the ability to store it away and keep it hidden but you did not. I more than understand why you are considered a her by the system. You will all be leaving tomorrow morning most likely correct? I will have your reward for the escort quest packaged for you. Along with something else for your entire party to carry." Ribbolt looked very serious but his words were soft and much warmer than they had been before, Walker felt touched by this.

"I'll head out for now then, we will make sure to say our proper goodbyes in the morning. That is if Elise, and Riley aren't still stuck training like crazy." With a small laugh Walker left the office closing the door behind him. Laurence and Ribbolt had begun to talk fast between the two of them. It seemed that Ribbolt had many things he was trusting in Laurence to complete.

Many tamers glanced at Walker as he headed to the resting quarters, the gossip about what happened in the market had already spread to almost everyone. The entire kingdom of Ordist would soon be preaching the kindness and dedication of the Omnipotent party. Thinking of this Walker felt embarrassed but also a sense of pride, they had saved many from the fate of a cursed item.

Upon entering the resting quarters, spotting the rest of the party was simple. Many of the tamers had left them a wide area to have their own space. This was their way of respecting their status. Walker knew this and was again embarrassed. "So what did Ribbolt have to say? Hopefully nothing too bad?" Gil wore a mask of worry as he asked.

"Well we can't expect king Rorick to just let this go, but since this could all take time we don't have to worry about a war breaking out immediately, things will get all tangled up in politics for a while. I think the biggest worry right now is what we will need to do with the girl we rescued." Walker was looking softly at the girl who had wrapped herself around Remey's arm asleep but still clutching tightly. "She can't go back to the demon territories, and she won't be able to stay here. Both places will not treat her well." Su was looking the most affected by this news, she had already felt her heart break learning the horrible treatment of the girl but now knowing that the girl would have no place to go home to her heart ached more. "This being said, I think she would fit in rather well at our mansion until she finds a place to call home, but that would be up to her. However seeing that she has already laid claim to Remey she may never let go."

Remey gave a solid glare hearing this but knew it was all because she had the most experience as an older sibling. Walker may have known how to calm his sister Lisa, but Remey had been able to calm all of her younger and even older siblings. The difference was just too much and the girl would have been attached to her no matter what.

"We also will. Need to ask her some questions and write up a small report for Scylla, as much as do not want to put any more stress on her, Scylla would be even more brutal. Just being around Scylla is tense." Walker remembered the chill he felt from the strength Scylla had shown, not to mention the baby leviathan she had somehow hid underneath her clothing. There were many mysteries he did not wish to solve revolving around that general.

"So when she wakes up we will ask her some things, you can leave it to me and Gil." Remey knew that the less of them that bothered the girl the better. Not to mention if they would be leaving sooner every single one of them shouldn't be occupied with one task.

"That's right Remey and I will hold this down, you and Su can go find a new shield for Su and grab those seeds and fruit."

"Oh it's nice to see you haven't forgotten the most important reason we are here." Walker rolled his eyes at Gil while letting his words drip with sarcasm. Su was understandably downcast remembering her shield falling to dust, it had been the best piece of gear she had ever had. Even if it was the worst it was still her favorite and nothing could ever top it.

"Leader, I don't think we should buy anything fancy. I just need something to get us home. I know you must have plans for when we return." Su was perceptive as always, she could see the gears turning in Walker's head.

Before Walker could open his mouth to confirm, the girl clinging to Remey had started to stir. She definitely still needed rest but did not seem accustomed to long periods of sleep, most likely due to previous trauma. Her eyelids fluttered a moment before her mind caught up with her body. "Ahp!" she squealed out a slight yelp, she had just remembered what had happened and now was awake in an unfamiliar place with a group of people she had just met very recently. Remey immediately used her free hand to brush her now exposed green hair, the tiny black horns were very different from Vincent's. This was because there were white lines curving around the girls where Vincent had pure black. Walker could only theorize this was due to the light elemental affinity the girl had.

Few moments passed as Remey talked her in to a semi calm state. "My name is Remey and this is my adventuring party. We helped the demi-humans capture Vincent, you will not need to worry about him anymore." The girl's eyes were wide and steadily dripping tears. Her facade from the market was long gone and her true emotions were showing.

Chapter 196 - 196. Last Minute Shopping

Remey stayed silent letting the girl adjust to this news. It was most likely some of the best news she had ever heard in her life. Walker and Su gave each other a look and decided to leave them alone to take away the pressure from two more sets of eyes. Leaving Midnight and Onyx who had found a spot to nap, they left the resting quarters. They trusted Remey and Gil to take diligent notes and smooth things out for the girl, Walker only wished that she had a name so they would be able to better address her. He decided it would be something they talked about when the two of them returned from their last minute shopping. Maybe if the girl decided to go with them she would think of a name for herself.

The tamers guild members were at their usual routine after the morning drama had calmed down, some of them seemed to be running towards the underground but it was few and far between. The two tamers at the fence were surprised that Walker and Su were going back out again after everything that occurred but after Walker made a bit of small talk asking about an armor shop they understood why the two were heading out.

There was a much heavier presence of guards on the streets since this morning, it was obviously due to the demon, they wanted to put the citizens at ease. However the fact that anything had happened did not deter the crowds from storming the coliseums since Walker could see them from the opposite side of the long market road. Walker went towards the same stand that had prepared the fruit for Gil this morning finding that the same man was running it. "Hello there, looking to buy a snack for the afternoon?" The merchant was rather polite and gestured at his many fruits at the ready.

"I actually was wondering if I could purchase some seeds from you? You see we have a large garden back home and would like to try growing some of these fruits there since we don't often see them in our kingdom. Would that be possibly?" The man shuffled some buckets and bowls around from underneath his work space. It looked like he had buckets filled with every type of fruit seed he sold.

"Usually I let them dry and save them to sell to the farmers once a month. I have no reason not to sell some to you, just don't get too angry at me if they do not like the soil you put them in. Some of these are very picky on how they like to grow." The man began to fill small paper bags with about thirty of each seed. There ended up being six bags of different seeds all together. "I am willing to sell you each for one gold. I could not call myself a merchant if I gave them all away for free but I couldn't possibly sell them at an expensive price to the esteemed hero party." The man had a playful smile as he called them a hero party. He had spent most of his morning gossiping with customers over the emissaries from the Crystal kingdom and especially over the morning's capture of a vile demon criminal.

"Ah you're so kind to us, we would not expect such a generous discount. We will take the seeds and two bowls of sliced fruit." Walker handed over twelve gold to the man who in turn gave him the bags. Walker stored them away which brought a sparkle to the man's eyes as he expertly sliced away at the fruit. The two bowls he gave them had been arranged in a way that made the thin sliced fruit in the form of a large rose flower.

Su was in a trance, it was a beautiful presentation. "Sir i am sure this will taste as amazing as it looks. You must really love what you do." Her words were so genuine that the man had to smile in response. He had received many compliments through the years but today it was just a little sweeter.

Giving the merchant man a wave the two moved onward with an armor shop in their sights. They devoured the delicious fresh fruit being sure to toss the empty bowls in the proper collection area. The shop they had in their sights was very plain looking, a simple shield and sword sign hung from the entrance. The two opened the plain wooden door to find a small open room with about twenty armor sets on display. Most were very basic in design, they were made of very common material.

Su immediately started judging each one, they may not have been here for armor but Walker saw no harm in using this chance to learn about armors. The more experience they had in the designs the better for when their forge was used to enhance or craft their own gears. The shields and swords were all on display against the walls. There were large two handed shields that followed general rectangular or badge like shapes. The single handed shields were mostly round or longer rectangles. Walker was judging the shapes to see what might be best for deflecting attacks. Su may be able to easily block things but since she had some skills and gear that led her to be able to deflect things more he was thinking that

having an oval shaped shield with rounded top may be better. He was drawing designs in his head, since Su often used her shield to bash forward or downwards he thought some spikes or a point on the edge would be fitting.

Realizing he was getting way ahead of himself he waved for Su to come over, he had already taken a look at every shield to make sure that they weren't cursed, he was a bit paranoid about this now. The best two options were either a two handed iron shield that was larger rectangle or two smaller bronze shields that were circular. Su did not see anything that greatly stood out and started to pick up the two handed shield. She would prefer this for temporary use since she would more or less need it to block attacks from getting near the girl. Su felt it was easier to completely hide her behind the one shield then need speed to use two small shields at once to hope they can cover enough area.

Walker had expected this and after the shield was in Su's hands he looked at the small counter by the door. One man sat there focused on reading a newspaper. The title on the front page read "Young emissaries make a splash in the arena!" This was another reason the party was so talked about. The kingdom news had been printing articles constantly, Walker could only fear how large the headline would be the next day after they had written about the demon being captured. He was also happy that there was no way to put pictures in these small newspapers or else everyone would know what he looked like. He could only deal with so much attention.

The man noticed them coming to the counter and placed the paper down, "Find something for yourself miss?"

"Yes sir, I would like to purchase this iron shield. May I inquire about the price?" With a nod the man checked some documents.

"That was crafted by a younger blacksmith, It is only made with iron at the most basic level. Due to this it comes at a cheap price of five gold. Many of a blacksmith's first works are normally sold this cheap or even less." This was not unheard of, most young craftsman system users would just sell their first creations for whatever they could get so they could find more materials to continue their work and push to increase their level.

Su used her adventurers plaque to purchase the shield and equipped it to her back so that it was easier to travel back. They were barely in the shop for half an hour before they had headed out. The streets were much more lively, Walker could see a massive crowd at the coliseum. It would see a battle was about to start, this was a good chance to get away from the area so they weren't lost in the sea of people.

Doubling their efforts to head back to the tamers guild they weaved through the streets, many merchants had closed up shop after today's events. This explained why so many were heading to the coliseums. When a demon selling cursed items causes the market road to be temporarily closed it was common sense that people would feel put off buy things for the day. The only benefit in this was an impromptu day off for merchants and neither Walker of Su were distracted to buy something they didn't need at another stall.

Chapter 197 - 197. Named

The two made it back to the Tamers guild fairly quick since they were heading away from the crowded streets. Su had been walking funny but this was most likely because she needed to adjust to the new weight of the shield. The iron shield weighed more than her previous one due to the modifications it had undergone by adding the dragon scales.

Once she had gone through the lowered fence with Walker she removed the shield, "What's up? Is it not comfortable?" Walker wasn't sure why she had removed it.

"Ah it's fine, I just want to get used to holding it. I thought it would be weird to carry it in the streets but with how much room there is here, I should be able to swing it around a bit before we get to the sleeping quarters." Walker gave Su the space she needed as they walked. It was interesting watching Su twist and turn to get used to the shield, Walker had not seen her do this the last time she got her previous shield modified, the party had split up to train. Walker was sure that some of the tamers found her actions odd but seeing the strange things they were doing to train with their beasts Walker didn't see any problem.

When they entered the resting quarters they found Remey still in the same position as when they left, however the girl seemed much more at ease having spent a few hours adjusting to Gil and herself. Gil had a small stack of papers that he had already sealed and handed to Walker as soon as he reached him. The girl shrank back in to Remey a bit more when Walker and Su approached. "Come on, that's Walker, we talked about him, he has a little sister named Lisa back home. He's really nice and can show you some cool . Introduce yourself, I promise he will be your friend too."

Remey whispered to her which seemed to make her a bit more courageous than a moment ago. "My name is-s Maria, Remey helped me pick it...." the girl paused a bit with another deep breath. "My system is a light benders system, I can make light bend and change sha-pes." She winced as she said this most likely as result of being harmed whenever she brought up her system.

"Well my name is Walker, I have a jack of all trades system. With it I can do a lot but one of them is this." Walker used his elemental manipulation to start making the light mana in the environment converge in to a little white glowing ball. This made the girls eyes open wide, due to her time in the demon territory she had never seen another being that could manipulate light at all. "I even have a friend who can shape light in to animals and flowers. I can take you to see her sing one day." Having seen the girl's reaction to his small elemental manipulation he knew that it would be the thing to get her more interested in opening up.

"Yes, I would want to. Remey said I could come with all of you? Is that really alright...I-I'm a demon too." She was waiting for Walker or Su to yell or hit her but it never came. The only thing that happened was Su and Walker smiled bigger.

"Well unlike here or where you were born, our kingdom doesn't hate any race. We may not all get along, but we don't have any rules that stop them from visiting, or living there. Aaaaanndd my party just happens to have way too much room in a mansion we are cleaning up. So you're welcome to come with us. Who knows maybe you will just make a few friends in our city of Diamond." Maria was silent but her eyes darted to everyone's faces looking for even a hint of cruelty or anger. Her eyes were red from obvious crying, Su and Walker could tell that she would be crying again now if she had any tears left. "We actually plan to leave tomorrow early morning, Su here is going to be your own personal guard, she's really strong." With a hushed whisper at the last part Maria seemed a bit distracted now.

She was looking at Su who was waiting for the right time to make her own introduction. With a soft hit on Walker's shoulder she started, "Leader is right, I just got this new shield here and it's pretty tough. I will make sure it stands between you and any mean monsters. All you will need to do is stand behind me and watch everyone use cool skills." She was not used to talking to those younger than her being the youngest in her own family, but she adopted the same tone Walker and Remey used which seemed to work well enough.

"I'm sorry your other shield broke." Maria said so softly that Su almost missed it, but luckily she had heard it.

"I don't know why, it was a shield, it did what it needed to. If it hadn't had my shield then it could have been me, or one of my party members hurt. No, that was the reason I carry a shield, to protect." Su may have lost the soothing tone but the fact that her words were so heartfelt more than got through to Maria. She had never met anyone with such a kind heart and Walker swore he saw stars shining in her eyes, Su may have found her very own little fan.

With the ice starting to melt between the party and the newly named Maria Walker wanted to make sure that she would be comfortable around Onyx and Midnight. Onyx was the most awake since the second Walker had entered he had been watching and waiting for the right time to speak. "Onyx, could you come make an introduction as well?" Onyx slithered over to Walker taking his usual spot on Walker's shoulders. "This is my youngest brother Onyx, he is also very nice, he has a telepathy skill and can talk to you in your head so don't let it scare you."

Onyx was looking at Maria and her at him. She didn't seem very afraid at all which was a bit of a surprise. "Like my brother said, I am Onyx. I am an abyssal serpent, it is nice to meet you Maria." Onyx kept things short afraid he would overwhelm her.

"Cute." Maria said one word which surprised them even more. "Some demons have tails that look like you but they can't talk. You are better." Well that made things easier, to be honest not once had they thought that as a demon she would be used to snakes because some of them developed snake like tails naturally. It was a trait they had which was used in combat to poison their opponents. It was even more surprising that Maria thought Onyx was cute, Walker had worried for no reason.

"Would you be up for one more introduction? Midnight over there is my little sister too and also Onyx's older sister. She will also be protecting you if you come with us." With a bit more nervousness Maria nodded, Midnight was a dragon after all, between her dark scales and bony wings she was fairly intimidating. Midnight, who had been pretending to sleep, shook herself as she stood up. She didn't immediately move close to Maria which made Walker proud.

Midnight sniffed the air making sure to remember Maria's scent in case she needed it. "Sister, says its nice to meet you. She will share some good food with you when we get back to the kitchen. She says she knows how to get aunt to give her extra."

"You sneaky, I knew you were convincing mother to give you more while she cooked." Walker gave her a soft flick on the head which was returned with a swish of her tail to his leg. The strange sight of a young dragon playing with a human completely destroyed any stereotypes Maria had about dragons. It turned out they are not evil monsters that want to eat all little demons but instead have the capacity to be just like humans.

The slightest smile shown on Maria's face before it was gone. She was not completely gone from her past hardships, one day Walker had hope that she would be smiling all the time. "So what do you think, do you want to come join us?" Maria couldn't speak a word her throat felt like it was closing up. She instead nodded her head over and over and the last of the tears she had dripped down her cheeks. Walker placed his hand softly on her head, "welcome to the family, we will find you some warm clothes

so you don't get too cold in the plains. The wind is really brutal you know." Maria's life had finally changed, after eight years of torture and suffering she was finally going to be somewhere safe.

Chapter 198 - 198. On Their Way

Once Maria had fallen asleep again, Remey and Su volunteered to ask around the guild to gather some winter clothing for her. Gil and Walker prepared some food for everyone since Midnight had started to hound them about being hungry, to appease her Walker gave her ten of the darkness crystals he still had stored away. Through the journey she had eaten about half of them. He wasn't sure how much it was influencing her growth but for good measure he pulled out some of the bones he kept for her to eat as well. Getting her scales and defenses stronger was definitely an all around benefit to the party, plus it might help her fly sooner. Having realized that she had yet to practice flapping her wings he had Onyx go outside with her and practice for a bit. This also got her off his case wanting more crystals.

"So with us leaving tomorrow we will need to meet with someone to take the letter to our kingdom. We also will give them our documents, it will most likely generate a quest so we should have some good motivation to get back faster. My plan is to move in a straight line, we have a lot to do if we are going to be strong enough to potentially stop a war." Gil was not surprised by Walker's ideals at all.

"I knew you would want to get involved. If we are going to do anything like that I think we should get that heroic leveling system unlocked. We are all level fourteen but for Midnight so if we really push four of us can figure it out. From there we can help Midnight get there too; it just might take longer. Onyx will have a tough time though he doesn't have a title like us." Gil felt bad that Onyx was limited by his normal experience rate, but they couldn't force a title to show up to multiply his experience from battles.

"Agreed, it will be the priority. We still have a little of those golden potions left, Midnight or Onyx can use them to catch up. I want to get our gear upgraded too, Su needs shields, you could use some better light armor, Remey needs new boots no matter how she will say she doesn't, and in all honesty I think I should get more variety of weapons. I need to do some serious training to enhance my style of battle, I am falling behind on using my skills to their fullest." Walker knew he would soon become a weak link if he let things keep getting too far behind. He also had remembered that he promised a certain someone he would work on his light Manipulation. If he did not hold up his promise he would embarrass himself.

Gil agreed on all counts, they did need these things. "I think we should do as many quests on our route home as possible. We should also try and hunt down more monsters. We are used to the snow imps and their strategies. They seem very common and troublesome, getting rid of more will only benefit more travelers."

"Sounds good to me." with their short talk Walker had confirmed his course of action. Once Su and Remey were back they gave Midnight and Onyx a shout to come back in. Midnight rushed in like she had never eaten food in her life. They all ate making sure to save some for Maria who woke up shortly after they had started to clean up. Seeing the food Maria had another emotional moment since she had often been fed scraps or told to root through the trash. This was indeed too much for her heart to take. She passed back out soon after eating, obviously needing the rest. Walker used a few more light heal spells to try and make sure she was fully healed but found he was worrying for nothing as she was fully healed physically.

With an early dinner done the party took a much needed rest making sure they would be early to rise.

Luckily Walker was woken up by Remey who had asked a nice tamer who trained bats to wake her up at the end of their training. The two woke everyone else up and helped Maria in to fluffy green robes they had gotten from a tamer who's daughter had long grown out of them. With all of them looking ready to brave the cold they left the resting quarters, Laurence, Riley, and Stella were already waiting for them.

"Well good morning, I am glad we could see you three before we left. It's going to be a bit more lonely without all of you." With Walker's words Elise started to hug each one of them goodbye even stopping to say a short goodbye to Maria.

"It was fun." Riley was as much a talker now as he was before, however Walker could see a strange energy in his eyes. One could say Riley was giving off a wild aura of his own, a definite result of his training these past few days.

"Ribbolt was awake all night making these," Laurence handed each of them a small metal insignia. The tamers guild insignia attached perfectly to their adventures guild plaques. "You are from now and forever recognized as honorary members of our guild. If you are ever in need or require a place to rest you will be welcome in any one of our headquarters." This was a very touching gesture, one that made all of their hearts more full. "Also here are the bronze dragon scales that were promised to you." Laurence motioned to a larger crate on the ground. Walker knew better than to try and lift it instead he just stored it away. These scales were much larger than the ones they had gotten from Midnight's dragon den or shedding. The difference in age and growth had a major influence on how the items crafted from them would come out.

"It was really a pleasure traveling with all of you" Walker gave Laurence one last handshake.

"You as well, safe travels." Laurence knew he didn't need any more words, they all knew how great their journey had been. They would always cherish the memories and looked forward to venturing to Diamond city again so they could visit.

Leaving through the lowered fence Walker nearly bumped into the larger gorilla trait guard, he had been standing right in their path. There were only four guards, the larger one Walker had almost bumped in to gave them a nod to follow them. This didn't seem like a form of goodbye escort but more of a way to show them where to go. The four guards took their sides and headed towards the large gate in the front, being so early the sun had barely managed to light the area. The silhouette of a very familiar general came in to view waiting for them at the large gate.

"I am glad to see you all well, Unfortunately king Rorick is too occupied at the moment with the recent capture of a national criminal." Scylla stood with her fan in front of her face staring down the parity as if she was going to start another tournament. " I've brought the letters we would like you to deliver, I trust you have something for me as well to deliver?"

Walker quickly pulled the papers Gil and Remey had put together from speaking to Maria. Scylla took them with one hand, letting them fall in to her sleeve and seemingly disappear. This strange sight stopped Walker for only a moment, She gave him an amused look before speaking again.

"That little package is also for you, King Rorick said he enjoyed testing the swords you brought with him and thought to return the favor. He also wishes for you to improve your skills and show him what you've learned the next time you all return here." She was gesturing to a bundle of wrapped items. There were two thin swords much like the two Walker had used in the tournament. However they held a strange aura to them. Using his all around appraisal skill Walker gave them a once over,

'Twin blitz sabers

+6atk, +6agi

When skills are used that require dual wielded blades the speed of the user is increased by an additional 2 points.'

These were beautifully made swords that seemed to beg to be held in balance, Walker had never felt the need to use two swords at once this much. The look on his face was almost a mirror to the look on

King Rorick's face when he had seen the sword they gifted him. This made Walker seriously reconsider using so heavily.

Looking back down at the remaining bundle of cloth, there were gold pins in the shape of a lion's head. Each radiated a slight golden glow, Scylla had noticed his gaze drawn to the pins. "Those are similar to the travel medals your king gave you. We would never tattoo outsiders with a mark but for those that have done our city great good we created these. Any demi-human that is part of any tribe, faction, pack, you name it will know that you are backed by our king."

With the most sincerity and thankfulness he could muster, "This is an honor, we never expected something so amazing."

Chapter 199 - 199. Warming Up

With her reasons for coming there completed Scylla seemed like she wanted to say more. Walker almost asked her but instead had realized she was not looking at any member of the party. Instead her eyes were resting on a fairly terrified Maria. She had pushed herself as close to Su's leg as possible almost as if she thought she could blend in.

Scylla slowly took the few steps forward while still looking at Maria, her head was looking down a completely deadpan face. Her eyes seemed to share a connection for just a moment, Maria detached herself from Su and looked straight up at Scylla. "When I was taken from my family I was brought to where the knight of gluttony reigned. I was freed from there after fifteen years. What knight owned you?"

Maria had wide eyes hearing this, she had not expected someone so powerful to have been in the same situation as she had been, I was with envy." Maria looked downwards. The two of them had both been in different territories. These territories were reigned over by the seven knights of sin. They were often the villains in children's books, the most evil of all the demons. Most people knew this was all part fantasy and part truth.

The truth was that there were indeed knights that had systems that made them considered the pinnacle of their respective sin. They would often rise to power claiming their own areas within the demon territory as their own. The power rules all mentality that is the core of demon traditions caused many small battles between the knights, this was often the reason that they would keep to themselves. Sometimes they would branch out to cause some trouble to other neighboring nations but often were caught in their own internal struggles. The last time they were recorded to stop their own battles was in a story book, there had been a demon lord that rose to power and forced the knights in to a contract. This gave them his army which he brought against the demi-humans. After the war had passed both

sides had stepped back leaving a significant hatred for each other. The ruling king of the Demi humans created his city and the demon lord disappeared in to the shadows.

"Well I do not believe you will find yourself feeling envious with them by your side." Scylla showed a small smile and walked away down the large open road. The guards followed her with a respectful nod to the party. Aria was looking off towards the direction of Scylla. The two were not friends nor did they speak much but they knew they were connected deeply. The sight of someone who had dragged themselves from the bottom and been freed from the cruelty of the demon territory inspired Maria, she would not sit idle, she would make a new life just like Scylla.

Su gave Maria a small pat on the back to signal it was time to start moving, Maria took a small corner of Su's clothes between her fingers and walked step to step with her out of the gates and towards her future. The lands around the capitol of Ordist were dotted with small villages and farm lands. The snow that had completely blanketed the plains seemed to have thinned just a bit, spring was on its way.

Realizing that Maria had legs much too small to keep up on the trails, or in the snow Su picked her up and placed her on her shoulders. Su was playing the older sister role very well, so much so that even Remey was a bit jealous. With their walking arrangements set they started to head out in to the true open plains where villages and farmland was nowhere to be seen. The merchant trails seemed fairly well worn, another sign that spring was starting to show its head. The mud however on the trails they walked was not a welcome sign, it made moving a bit harder. The only one that seemed to be enjoying the mud was Gil who was scouting ahead, narrowing down some possible prey for their dinner later. Many small animal tracks were keeping him occupied, one in particular that drew his attention were the tracks of a common rabbit. They developed white fur for the winter and Gil wanted to challenge himself to spot it.

Continuing well ahead of the party he saw that the tracks left the trail and went on in to the snow, the grass was popping slightly through the snow in this area making tracking much rougher. He was trying to stand a bit taller so he could try and spot movement from farther away when something caught his attention. What he thought was going to be just the white rabbit he was looking for turned out to be more, much more. The much had only been a small layer before the still frozen ground. Do to this the footprints of the much larger horned rabbits looked unlike they normally would.

For the party this could spell some trouble for the party, if the horned rabbits were already leaving their hibernation they would be out in the plains in droves. Not only would it mean they need to battle them more often as they traveled but it also meant the predators that constantly hunted the horned rabbits would also be hunting the party. The plains were suddenly much more dangerous.

Gil retreated from his distance to return to the group, he needed to let them know to adjust their strategy for a more agile opponent. They could handle snow imps and ice wraiths but adding the horned rabbits and potentially other monsters, this could easily throw them off their course. Gil turned and retreated quietly until he knew he was out of hearing range, then began to run the distance back to the party. However as he approached them he realized they had already discovered the new enemy.

There was a large horned rabbit jumping around Remey trying to stab forward with its yellowing horn. Unlike a regular rabbit these horned rabbits were almost triple the size. The yellow horn that grew out of their head to a point would be longer the more years they lived. The females had a deadly paralyzing poison that developed within their horn but the males did not. There was no way to tell the difference normally.

Remey was doing her best to dodge the quick leaps from the horned rabbit. It's large legs gave it the advantage in close combat. Gil had already drawn his bow but was farther away than he preferred, the rabbit was moving way too much for him to fire his arrow without potentially hitting Remey. Instead of firing he let out an annoyed grunt and sprinted forward to get closer.

Su had Maria safely guarded behind her shield with Midnight behind them guarding their backs. Walker had warned Midnight to stay away from the horned rabbit, he was not sure if it was able to paralyze her and did not want to take the risk. Walker was waiting for the right chance to slow or stop the rabbit but its movements were erratic, Remey was going a great job of dodging it's attacks but this could not go on forever. Noticing movement in the distance Walker's heart almost stopped thinking it was another enemy, however to his delight it was a sprinting Gil. Gil had run a few more feet to get to a better vantage, he was still not sure of his shot but he aimed for the ground near the horned rabbit.

With the arrow let loose it landed in to the snowy ground making a solid thunk. The rabbit heard and saw this instinctively jumping away. This put enough distance between them for Walker to send a fire bolt its way. The spell impacted the rabbits white fur causing it to burn and tumble around. In its panic Gil was able to aim and get two quick shots in to it nearly ending the battle there. Remey jumped in with a hammer fist completely ending the fight. The slightly burned and arrow pierced horned rabbit was down for the count.

'Defeated one horned rabbit male

Gained 20 exp multiplied to 200exp.'

Gil caught up to them, "So if you haven't realized, the horned rabbits are out of hibernation. There are plenty of tracks ahead of us so we will definitely be bumping in to more."

"No duh they are out of hibernation, while you were off exploring I was doing all the work." Remey ran at Gil and reared to punch him in the arm. Gil tried his best to dodge but Remey found her target and Gil found a new bruise.

"You really need to stay a bit closer when you leave to scout, what if the horned rabbit had found you and not us?" Su took on a strict tone as she started in on reprimanding Gil.

Walker watched all this smiling while he stored away the horned rabbits body. Tonight they would have a pretty good meal. The horned rabbits were tougher than regular rabbits but had more meat, something Midnight was sure to enjoy.

Chapter 200 - 200. New Prey

With their new enemy taken down and the party adequately on alert Gil led them slightly out of the way to avoid the larger number of horned rabbit tracks. "The worst thing about the spring in the plains is that the horned rabbits come out in mass. They spent all winter in dens sleeping. Their young should have been born and they will all be coming out too."

"Where did you learn that?" Since Gil was acting all know it all Remey felt the need to fight him on his knowledge,

"Didn't you ask the warriors in the rabbit tribe about the monsters in the area when you went out hunting? Or did you just spend your time threatening to punch them?" Hitting the nail on the head Remey puffed up her cheeks in frustration. Normally she would run to hit him again but instead she held back knowing Gil was right and not wanting to admit it. Gil had really made the most of his hunting while with the tribe, he had taken many chances to learn the insider tricks to hunting.

Gil was about to share more about his learning but was interrupted by another two horned rabbits in the distance. The two were jumping at each other trying to stab the other with their horns. "Walker, the two seem to be fighting over territory, should we pass or try to take them out?" Gil already had an arrow in his other hand waiting for the word to take a long shot at one of them.

Walker couldn't see the harm in getting some more experience and also gaining a bit more meat for the journey back to their kingdom. With a nod Gil had taken aim tracking the larger horned rabbit. It only took a moment for him to have his sights set and to let the arrow free. The party watched as the arrow soared in the air and hit the larger rabbit in the back leg completely stopping its ability to jump. The other horned rabbit took the advantage and stabbed in to the larger with its horn finishing the job for the party.

The rabbit now victorious aimed at the party since it was now the owner of this territory and wanted to defend it. The horned rabbit showed it's running prowess but bursting toward them. It's back legs giving it massive back leg muscles pushing its speed much faster than expected. Gil had already released his second arrow and missed his target due to misjudging the speed. Making adjustments his third arrow managed to hit the horned rabbit making it lurch to the side, however there was no time for a fourth arrow due to the rabbit not slowing enough. The now very aggravated horned rabbit was aiming for the closest person, that happened to be Su who could not move because she was defending Maria.

The horned rabbit proved too fast for Su and as it jumped forward managed to scrape by her arm. Su was adept in deflecting blows now but speed was still her weakness, the blow to her arm was enough to draw blood but should not have stopped her. The problem was that Su had faltered slightly, this was a female horned rabbit and had just gotten some of its paralyzing poison in her.

Walker saw this hesitation and started to move himself. Midnight was much faster though, she jumped in to the side of the horned rabbit pushing it away and tearing into it with her claws. Walker expected Su to be completely incapacitated however she soon regained some balance and stood strong in front of the scared Maria. The poison resistance skill was really paying off, as the horned rabbit had recovered and aimed at Su again. She blocked and deflected the horn causing it to stumble again. It had started to lose too much blood from Gil's arrow and Midnight's claws. This was the perfect chance for Remy to land a defense breaking palm, she had been thinking about how to properly work it in to her fighting style since the tournament. Her palm hit the shoulder of the horned rabbit causing a sickening crack to ring out as it cracked bone. The horned rabbit fell to the ground completely defeated.

Walker was already next to Su using a light heal spell on her to fix up her arm. "Lisa is going to be so angry at me tearing the winter clothes she made me." Of course that was what Su was worried about, not the fact that she had just been poisoned.

"You know she will fix it up no problem, but your arm won't always be able to be healed like this, if it had been somewhere else it could have been permanent." Walker used a stern tone to draw his point home. She may be the defender of the group but he would not tolerate avoidable injury.

Su understood this was coming out of kindness and not anger so she nodded, she did still feel a bit bad. Remey was comforting Maria who was not going anywhere near the horned rabbit that Walker had yet to store away. " They are definitely dangerous, it is good to be afraid. But you don't need to worry, we will keep them well away from you." her words seemed to be doing the trick, "Plus they will taste good roasted tonight." Maria grew a bit wide eyed and maybe more afraid since she did not expect they would be eating something like the horned rabbits.

After storing away the nearest horned rabbit Walker and Midnight headed to the larger one noticing it had some strange injuries. They had clearly been made by some sort of teeth and not from territory fights between other horned rabbits. Motioning for Gil to come take a look Walker had hopes that Gil had heard something from the rabbit tribesman.

"Ohh that doesn't look right." Gil knelt down looking at the partially healed wounds on the horned rabbits back. "These are definitely teeth of some sort, they don't look like those wolves we battled before but I would say it's similar. Maybe a speckled fox?" Gil was wracking his brain on every word the warriors had told him and could only come up with one possible outcome.

"I have actually heard of those!" Walker had seen one of the pelts in the tribe and managed to ask what it was. "The speckled fox usually raids the dens of the horned rabbits to get at their young before they can get out in the plains to run away, my guess is this rabbit was lucky enough to fight one off." The white and grey speckled fur was where the name speckled fox came from. They were an interesting monster having a wind and earth affinity. They could easily dig out a horned rabbit den but also use a unique skill called air step. The skill air step would allow them to use the very air around them as a foot hold to attack at strange angles. This made them very hard to hunt making their fur very rare and expensive.

Gil was recalling these things as well and a small smile had started to appear. "You know these are supposed to be a pretty goo challenge to hunt, and since one seemed to be around the area maybe i should try to do a bit more scouting." Walker knew exactly where this was going, he stored the horned rabbit away giving Midnight a look.

"Let's go Midnight, we can leave this hunting maniac to find his fox by himself." Surprisingly Midnight shook her head and huffed at him.

"Sister says she will catch a fox before Gil will." Gil raised an eyebrow at Midnight.

"You're on, the first one to catch a speckled fox gets to sleep during their night watch!" The two went off in opposite directions completely ignoring Walker's attempts to make them stop and return to the group.

Walker cursed them as he went to set up camp, since the two had run off he figured it was safer to stay in one place for the night even though it was a bit early. Gil was very confident that he would be the first to find one since he could follow the tracks wherever they lead. However he was underestimating Midnight's ability to smell around and track a scent.

Midnight had already taken the chance to smell the horned rabbit and was following the scent around the areas it had traveled earlier in the day. Gil was running off following a set of tracks made by a horned rabbit in the hopes that they would lead to a den that was hopefully being stalked by a speckled fox. The two had headed off in completely opposite directions, who knew which one would reach their goal first.

Su and Remey had spoken to Walker about setting up camp and all agreed that when Midnight and Gil returned they would be in charge of splitting the watch at night just the two of them. That would teach them to place a bet and rush off alone.