

Master 231

Chapter 231 - 231. Light A Spark

Once Walker had gotten himself awake and ready for the day it was time to hunt for where Midnight was sleeping. He noticed that Onyx was not in his tattoo form and nowhere to be found. Walker wanted to know where he had wandered off to but decided to leave it be, it was time to get training!

Checking the kitchen first Walker found only a few snacks to eat while wandering the mansion. The next destination was the fireplace in the dining hall, he knew that this was also a favorite napping spot for the cute dragon.

Surprisingly he found that Midnight was not there either, the embers were barely burning in the fireplace showing that no one had been there to stoke it up for some time. With a puzzled expression he decided to check outside, maybe she had gone to the forge for some reason. The wandering blacksmith could have heated things up to experiments with the environment.

Walker left out the back door and barely made it ten steps before he noticed Midnight in the slightly muddy training field. She was flapping her wings in strong up and down motions slightly lifting off the ground with each attempt. Her wings had been getting thicker and more developed these last few days since she had been practicing every day. She had become enamored with flying after seeing Stella and Elise both accomplish it multiple times.

She would only get about an inch off the ground before she would touch back down but Walker could see just how fast she was developing. It was only a short while ago that she was only able to open and close her wings, let alone still had all her baby scales.

Keeping his distance Walker waited until it looked like Midnight had reached a breaking period. Once she had stopped and regained her breath he made his move forward. "Good morning Midnight! You look like you're really starting to get the hang of things!" Midnight puffed up her chest happily hearing his praise. Walker wanted to make sure he played to her pride as much as possible so that she would be even more motivated to figure out a fire breath skill.

Midnight had already learned a black fireball skill but it had too many downsides. On top of consuming all her mana and leaving her completely defenseless it was also a one shot skill. If the black fire ball was to miss or not finish off her opponent it was basically signing her own death certificate.

"Are you still up for some more training? I have the last of the darkness crystals and can try and manipulate some fire with my skills. If we can figure out a flame breath attack you can help out our wandering blacksmith friend who seems to have slept all night in the forge." Hearing that Walker was going to give her the remaining darkness crystals already energized her, but having the goal to have her own fire breath attack like she had seen at the tamer's guild was even more so.

She nearly tackled Walker as she tried to get him to hand over the darkness crystals sooner. "Alright, alright, I will get them out don't worry." Laughing at her actions Walker took the remaining darkness crystals from his storage along with a damaged piece of rib bone from the greater ice imp. He figured that the greater ice imp was a strong opponent and if she ate the bone it could help her strengthen her scales some more.

Midnight made quick work of the darkness crystals, her teeth shattering them in her mouth. The wisps of darkness elemental mana flowed around her, while she absorbed it there seemed to be a strong aura growing within her. The damaged rib bone served as her dessert, Midnight easily chomped down on it making it seem like she was eating candy. The wisps of darkness elemental mana seemed to have a few strands of bone white mixed in as they faded in to her scales.

Walker watched this process trying to grasp the flow of mana from crystal to living being. This was not something every monster was able to do and served as valuable experiences for those that needed to understand a certain element. Walker had not made much effort to learn darkness elemental mana but had a solid grasp on it due to his connection with Midnight. He knew that it was much like the light elemental mana which was part of every day life. It would fade in strength during the brightest time of day and increase during the darkest period of night. The darkness elemental mana was fleeting and could show up easily but also disappear easily, Walker could almost describe it as slippery.

The shadows around Midnight and Walker seemed to be drawn to her while she was stationary, this was the finishing of her little meal of crystals and bone. She had fully absorbed the mana from the crystals and stabilized her own inner energy. This process had only taken her a little over an hour which just went to show how focused she was on her own training. Midnight could feel that there was a huge amount of energy built up within her chest.

"There we go, looks like you are ready to train! I am going to get a fire started and we can both try to manipulate it with our mana." Walker's plan was simple, start a fire and have Midnight try to breathe some darkness mana from her body in to it. After she had control of that she could use her internal flames to do the same and create a black flame breath attack.

Walker gathered some wood from old training dummies and a pile near the walls. The fire he started was not too large but would last long enough to them both to take their time experimenting. "Midnight I am going to try and mix the fire mana with the dark mana and see if I can make a black flame. Try to release small amounts of your own darkness mana in to the flame too. Just small amounts, it doesn't all need to come out at once like your black fire ball." Midnight looked like she understood and got right next to the growing flames.

She was almost touching the flames with her face, Walker was constantly amazed by her natural resistance to fire since she always slept almost on top of the fire in the fireplace. He could easily see her making a nest in the embers if she was ever cold.

Walker himself started by watching the shadows that seemed to dance with the flames. They moved freely like the flames did almost like the light given off by the fire was chasing the shadows. This made Walker realize that fire was not necessarily the same as the light element but the two being so closely related would make it much harder to blend fire and darkness. He decided to start with manipulating the shadows that were cast in to becoming denser. The mana he used was almost so small that it did not even register as a single point, it was regenerated before he even really noticed. The affinity he had for darkness element mana since Midnight had consumed a lot of the condensed understanding was much higher.

The shadows became almost as dense and dark as the night sky, they were able to fend off the light coming from the fire, however this was not Walker's goal, he instead wanted them to welcome the heat of the fire. He first tried to bring flames without any adjustment toward the dark shadows. The results were not as he desired, the flames completely dissipated after mixing with the dark shadows. The light element within them had been snuffed out and the fire in turn which was mixed in with it as well.

Walker glanced at Midnight who was having her own struggles, she would puff up her chest with a full breath and release it with some darkness mana all at once. This led to a puff of darkness infused air that would force the flames away from her mouth not mixing at all but constantly bending away. The darkness mana was proving to be a real pain to infuse with the fire on purpose. Seeing this Walker realized the black fireball skill must be an instinctual skill that Midnight's species must learn and not one that they gained through experience, meaning that even she did not have a grasp on how the flames became mixed with the dark mana.

Midnight was working hard on slowly releasing her breath, she needed to forcefully slow the release of the mana she built up. Walker wanted to help her but realized that he had no skill that would act as a support for her at the moment. Sadly the two of them needed to work out how to do this on their own and once they succeeded then maybe they could give the other some guidance.

Chapter 232 - 232. Decay

Wanting to beat Midnight to the punch Walker focused on condensing some shadows even more, this time he was going to try and use the flames to send only the pure fire elemental mana to the shadows. This seemed to be working a little at first. The flame elemental mana was heating up the shadows so much that Walker felt that the shadows could actually burn him if he were to touch them. The problem was that the second he tried to change the shadows and fire element mix shape it split apart again in to two separate elements again losing any semblance of fusion.

Taking another shot at it he repeated the process but this time thought that he would let a little light element rotate around the shape of the flame he wanted to make. If it was really so much so that the light and dark elemental mana chased each other would it work that the light elemental mana would help to hold the darkness and fire together? This was what he asked himself while the shadows started to mix with the fire. The two mana had reached the same hot shadows and before but not some of the light elemental mana from the fire was being pulled in a thin membrane around the ball shape Walker wanted.

The shape was holding up so far the heat was still there. The light element was not being completely sniffed out by the dark. The fire elemental mana was not being dragged by the light element in to the ball of shadow more and more. Just as Walker thought there would be a breakthrough and the darkness elemental mana would become flames the light elemental mana was pushed away by the darkness elemental mana. The two had become out of balance and caused the ball to fall apart.

Walker took a second to breath and found that Midnight was almost in a meditative state birthing in and out very slowly. It looked as if she was practicing using the mana within her breath. She had given up on mixing it with flames for now since she realized that she had no control over the strength of the mana she released. Walker could tell that she was taking great effort to slow the flow when she built the mana up. It took her entire body's strength to make the mana flow the way she desired it to.

Not wanting to be outdone in terms of effort Walker tried his experiment again. This time he acted more carefully like Midnight was doing with her mana. He was consuming more of his own mana to manipulate the three elements this time by taking longer. However when he got to the stage where he had the light elemental mana flowing around the heated shadow ball everything was more stable. The heat was being drawn in by the light elemental mana but at a slower rate. The balance was in check and the shadows were heating up to higher and higher temperatures. The feeling of being burned as coming stronger and stronger to his exposed skin.

With a burst of flame the ball had turned in to a pitch black fire. He had succeeded in controlling the three elemental manas to create a black fireball in his hand. The fire elemental mana was the joining factor between the light and dark mana. The light mana was mixed in with every lick of flame making the darkness mana stand out. The two were dancing with each other in a perfect balance, when one element would push the other would push back.

' The user had gained a triple elemental skill due to their use of the elemental manipulation skill. The skill black flame creation has been learned.

Black flame creation- 2 mana cost

Black flames are a fusion of three elements. They are very hard to extinguish in the night and in the daylight. They not only can purify the darkness but also corrupt the light. Burns left by these black flames do not only cause damage to the opponent but will also leave a longer term decaying effect.'

This was what he was after, he had succeeded in blending the three elements together to create his skill. This black flame was not to be messed with, it was similar to his other flame skill evil consuming flame. This black flame could purify darkness as well but in a different way. The difference was it could also harm light elements as well by using the darkness element it was made in to. The fact that the burns would leave a decaying effect was very scary to think about, if an enemy escaped after being harmed by these flames they would slowly have their injury decay way until their death. This was both good and bad, it could irritate and anger a strong opponent that could handle the first attack. On the reverse it could also help deal with opponents that ran away after being harmed, with Gil tracking them they could find the opponent and collect the defeated body or finish it off.

Midnight had stopped her controlled breathing as was staring at the flames in Walkers grasp, she was not moving a single muscle. Walker almost said something but realized she was having some kind of breakthrough of her own. Midnight stayed like this for a few minutes before cautiously stepping towards the flames in his hands. She hesitantly brought her face close to them and breathed out very slowly. The mana she breathed out reacted instantly causing a s,all flame to wish out. This was the start of her own goal.

Walker did not dare to extinguish the flame but instead started to work on keeping control of it while using the least amount of mana possible. He started to develop more and more control while Midnight slowly breathed in and out practicing the soft woosh of black flames again and again. Neither of them noticed the wandering blacksmith that had leaned up against the wall of the mansion to watch this spectacle.

The two of them maintained this for a large amount of time, Midnight had started to release more and more mana at once making the small woosh turn in to a foot long black fire blaze. The fire Walker had started previously and had completely turned black with their control. Midnight took a larger breath inwards preparing to release more of her own mana than she had done before. Walker swore he saw some for the black flames be inhaled when she was breathing in. To test his theory he extinguished his black flames before Midnight could stop herself.

Midnight breathed out with force, there were not wisps of darkness mana but instead full on black flames. The were very spread out but were indeed what she wanted to do. Midnight jumped around seeing her success and tackled Walker to his back. The two rolled on the ground in excitement before waves of exhaustion started to overcome them. They had been at this for hours practicing.

The two were breathing heavily feeling rather pleased with the work the had put in, the sun had risen and started to fall all the while. The sound of clapping brought them both back to a sitting up position. The wandering blacksmith was smiling widely still covered in coal dust but seemingly more energetic than he had been the previous day. He came over to the two of them and patted Walker and Midnight in the back. They realized that he had just witnessed their accomplishment.

Walker felt a bit embarrassed but Midnight straightened her necks a bit glad that she was being recognized for her efforts. The wandering blacksmith gave them both a nod and headed back towards the forge, after a little time the sounds of hammering could be heard. No smoke was leaving the smoke stack from the forge leading Walker to believe that the wandering blacksmith had started to make some modifications after witnessing the kinds of flames he would be forging in. They had really found a strange blacksmith to help them out, but he was extremely dedicated.

Now that the two had gotten an understanding of their skills Walker took a look at Midnight's learned skill,

' Decaying flame breath- 5 mana cost (Changes with duration)

The black flames expelled through the natural flames within carry a strong decay that eats away at the body of those damaged by it. The user can extend the duration of this breath attack by taking a deeper breath and infusing larger amounts of mana. The flames can burn hot enough to leave severe burns.'

Reading this out loud Walker had spurred Midnight to stand up and prance about in victory, she was waiting for Walker to praise her. " Congratulations on getting your fire breath skill! Now we can practice the next few days before the VIP auctions and master it." This made Midnight more excited since she was one step closer to being the powerful dragon like she had met at the tamers guild.

Chapter 233 - 233. Balancing Mana

The pair made sure the fire was not burning at all anymore and made their way inside. Now that they were done Walker noticed they had both become covered in grey ash, The fire he had started was constantly raining ash on them while they focused, they had been too distracted to notice this. Since this was the case the two headed off to clean up. They were extremely hungry having skipped lunch and pushed in to dinner, however it was well worth the entire day spent trying to figure out how to meld these elements in to a form they could use.

Finding that everyone was already at the table the two jumped in eating before saying anything to anyone. They got a few worried looks but Gil who had headed out to the training field when he had woken up saw that the two were hard at work training, so he had taken it upon himself to keep everyone away from disturbing them. He knew that this was an important task for the two of them to develop their skills. This would not only make the two of them stronger but also the entire party.

The addition of the decaying flames Midnight would be practicing on the gear forged was anybody's guess, the only person that seemed to have an idea was the wandering blacksmith who had started altering the forge at a rapid pace. He knew the ins and outs of different elements' effects on the materials he would use. Thus the party would allow him free reign to make whatever changes that were necessary.

After the two had taken their fill and dinner had started to die down Hilda shooed them away to bed, she was still Walker's mother and she swore up and down that after training all day he needed rest. Midnight being part of the family was also forced off to sleep, however she was not as deterred as Walker was since she liked to nap after eating anyway. After a but more pushing Walker gave in and let sleep take him.

Feeling a nudge to his shoulder Walker woke up before the sun had even started to rise. Midnight was pushing her head in to his shoulder trying to wake him up. Onyx was wrapped in a coil on her back and immediately relayed her full desire. "Sister says it is the perfect time to train her new skill."

Walker wondered why it was the perfect time to train her skills now but not feeling too tired he started to get up without arguing. The three of them went downstairs and outside to the dark training field. The moon was just starting to set over the horizon making it extremely early in the morning. Midnight had woken him up well before the sun would rise. "Brother can you make one of the light orbs for me to

eat? I am still hungry since it is too early for me to properly enjoy the sun." Walker obliged onyx and made ten of the yellow light orbs for him to eat. "Thank you brother." Onyx greedily snapped them up before wrapping himself around Walker's shoulders and watching him and Midnight prepare a small fire.

As the fire started to grow the two of them took up spots like they had before. The difference this time was that Walker was able to use the black flame skill to create a black fire ball in his hands. Much to his surprise the flame dissipated almost instantly. This was not as easy as it had been before. Walker looked to Midnight who also was struggling, her decaying breath skill was much smaller and needed much more of the fire they had built to support it.

"Are we failing because there isn't enough light mana around to keep the black flames balanced?" Walker mumbled this out loud while creating another ball of black flames. This time she used his mana manipulation to pull more light elemental mana near. It proved to still be ineffective though. Walker decided that he needed to increase the draw of the light elemental mana more so he created a few of the yellow light orbs he had made before. "Leave these ones for now, I need them to test a theory."

Creating yet another black flames Walker pulled the higher amount of light elemental mana towards it finally balancing out the flames. This skill had now proven to be more delicate than he expected. The naturally stronger dark elemental mana was easily flowing to the flames since it was darker at this time of night. The light elemental mana was only brought out from the moon and stars so there was not as much around.

Midnight had given up on forcing out more of the flames but instead tried to concentrate the ones she could make. There was already a noticeable difference, instead of spreading out in a wide arc the flames were now being sent out in a small stream at greater distance. The flames that had been orange and yellow on their fire were not dancing with a bit of darkness. This was another change from the previous day, The higher light elemental mana from the day had made the darkness elemental mana stand out in the, not the opposite was happening with the light elemental mana. Walker was not sure how to use this to his advantage.

It was obvious that in the height of day that the light element spells would be strongest. The same was said for darkness element spells at the peak of night. This may be the perfect chance for him to try and practice some dark elemental skills. He had some that he refused to use because of their danger such as the mana desolation skill which was indeed of the darkness element. The fact that it destroyed the targets mana system was just too dangerous to use around any of his party. So it was time to manipulate the shadows.

Onyx watched intently as Walker released his black flames and instead started to manipulate the dark elemental mana in the shadows to condense in to a solid ball of pure darkness. Onyx was a bit fearful of this since it was the opposite of what he would normally eat. The thing was he could hide in shadows in tattoo form and even had an affinity for darkness mana, it almost called to him. "Brother hold that ball of darkness there." Onyx slowly moved from Walker's shoulder and tried to touch the ball of darkness. His nose tipped it slightly and the ball seemed to stick to him like glue. It melted over his entire body making him nearly pitch black with no shine on his scales at all.

Onyx immediately snapped out eating the yellow light orbs that Walker had created. There was still no light shine on Onyx's scales like usual, "Brother I need more light." The voice Onyx used to relay this message was desperate, Walker responded by creating a yellow light orb after yellow light obs. Onyx ate them all up until a slight shine started to show through his scales. "Brother, I was able to understand something about myself. The darkness elemental mana can balance in my body as well as the light elemental mana."

Onyx seemed to be switching between the two different elements on his scales to balance them, Walker was surprised that he had found a way to practice his own affinities for the two elements without using skills. This was purely manipulating mana within his body now something anyone could do.

Walker returned to creating his shadow ball while keeping an eye on Onyx and Midnight who both were practicing their own ways. The ball of darkness was not at all like the light orbs, it was able to change shape much easier as if it did not need a form to exist. This must be why shadows could seemingly copy any shape in reference to the light around something.

Walker shaped the dark ball of mana, he first made a spike that looks sharp but his hand actually moved through it when he tried to touch it. This spike wasn't really there because the darkness elemental mana was not condensed enough. Walker focused more of his mana in to manipulating the element to try and achieve this. Slowly the deeper the darkness grew the more physical the shadow spike seemed to be.

Time passed as they all experimented with the different elements manas, Walker finally felt resistance from the dark elemental spike after taking over an hour to condense it. Darkness elemental mana did not seem to want to stay in a solid form and was trying to spread out again. Walker wondered why this was the case when light elemental mana easily condensed, could it be because light elemental mana was always flowing through the air? While darkness elemental man shifted and spread out as big as it could at all times? Walker was left with so many more questions than he had started with looking at the darkness elemental spike.

Chapter 234 - 234. Remey Goes Out

' The user has learned the skill shadow spike through experimentation with the elemental manipulation skill.

Shadow spike- 4 mana cost

The user controls the existing shadows to form a sharp spike. This takes a significant amount of time to properly form. The target damaged with this spike is inflicted with strong decay that is nearly impossible to purify without a high amount of light elemental mana.'

At first glance Walker was not impressed by this skill in the least. What point of the battle would he be able to take up his time to create such a spike. However he was thinking in the wrong way, this skill was not for when he was in a battle but before it started!

Walker found that this skill would best be used when he had the chance to catch an enemy off guards before they had spotted him. Not only would he be able to cause some damage to the enemy but it would also place a huge amount of decay on them which would slowly eat at the enemy's health. This effect would be very useful against strong opponents that took time to deal with, Walker could already see Su holding off an opponent that was decaying away until it collapsed. This could be his easy but time consuming tank buster.

The only other party member that could use this skill better would have been Midnight who is more geared towards sneaking up and defeating opponents. Unfortunately she was limited in what skills she could learn. This was just the way the world worked. However this did not mean she could not do something similar with her decaying breath. The new strategy to wait out a tough opponent could prove invaluable. One drawback did come to mind though.

The party had been very lucky to keep monster bodies to sell or use as food. There were also the ones that were materials for crafting. If they inflicted decay on them then the bodies would have the potential to be useless to them in any way. Walker would need to somehow have enough light mana and a purification skill. This seemed too far-fetched to use in a dimly lit forest where the darkness mana would end up more powerful anyways.

Coming back to reality Walker saw that Onyx had curled up and looked much more normal that he had before. Onyx had completely adjusted his body and balanced out the two conflicting manas. There were some differences that could be seen clearly though, his scales were much darker than before. Walker compared them to staring in to an abyss, this really fit the name for his species. There was also a bit of

light that would glint in Onyx's eyes if he looked close enough. Walker was sure that this was the remaining light elemental mana he had consumed that he was using to balance things out.

Midnight was also having a bit more luck, The flames that came from her mouth had grown in size and strength. Instead of the small ones that needed the assistance of the fire Walker had made she was creating her own again. This was a much more difficult process but since her and Walker knew the basics from the prior training they had progressed more easily.

While the sun had started to rise above the horizon bringing light to the training fields Walker found it becoming much more difficult to create the shadow spike. He spent some time practicing this skill to see if he could make it appear within the shadows from a distance. Sadly he needed to be in contact with shadows himself for the skill to make any spike at all. On top of this he found that his hand would not make any contact now that the sun was rising. The shadow spike that he was fearful to touch was nothing but a shadow in the shape of a spike and nothing more.

Walker saw Midnight struggling to adjust her flames and decided he would return to practicing the black flames as the sun rose as well. Onyx was coiled up enjoying his morning meal of sunlight, his body warm and balanced as it should be. The three planned to train the day away.

While Walker was busy training Remey had decided to do a few things herself. She had always hated the fact that she could not create potions that would heal fevers or help someone sleep at night when they were stressed by growing pains. She could only make small shelves and teas that she had learned from the alchemist buildings alchemists. She had taken too much time learning these things when she was younger and realized that with Walker's help she would be able to put her hard earned knowledge to use.

She had decided that she would make sure the alchemy room was in perfect shape for when Walker had the fresh herbs from the garden. Nothing would stop her in this respect, She decided to visit the old man at the alchemist building, she did not care for a second that she would be interrupting his new experiments with the pure water he had gotten from their previous visit.

Making sure to keep to herself Remey headed out towards the alchemist building. She saw that Walker was too focused on the black flames in his hands to even notice her. The only one that seemed to catch her leaving the mansion from the back door was Onyx. She held up her finger to make a shush motion. Onyx responded with a little head bob before resting again watching Midnight breathe small black flames.

Remey told herself that she would find the best light crystals for Onyx when she had the chance as a thank you. Her trip was fairly uninterrupted, she walked to the lower tier of the city feeling back at home. She had ran around the streets with her siblings getting in to plenty of trouble and random brawls. The alleyways were just shortcuts to her that could take her to any place she wanted without issue. She avoided any of the merchant stalls that were crowded and made some rounds towards the older stalls that were less visited.

"Been a while kid, come to try and buy out all of my honey again?" There was an older woman who had caught Remey taking a look as she passed.

"Psshh that honey was too expensive, no one else would have bought it I did you a favor." The retort was not as malicious as it would have sounded to the unknowing listener. The old woman showed a snaggle toothed grin before grabbing a small jar of yellow gold honey.

"Here honey, take the honey." The old woman laughed but ended up coughing a bit at the end. "I hope your little brothers are still doing well, no sore throats this time of year?"

"Nope not a one! Since I started adventuring I have sent them some good money for food. I even had one of my party member's mothers send some breads." The old woman handed Remey the small jar of honey the same grin on her face.

"Good, no get along now before you scare more of my business away." The woman tried to put on a stern face but her smile was still indeed showing through.

"Not that I wanted to stay anyways!" Remey picked up the pace, slipping the honey in to her pocket. The old woman was in a much better mood seeing that the little girl that had once begged for honey for her little brother's sore throat was all grown up. She didn't notice the gold coins on her table until much later, there was no chance of catching up to Remey now.

Remey went on like this only visiting stalls that had elderly or ill looking merchants. She had visited these stalls so many times since she was little that they would always recognize her in an instant. These merchants would start their conversations with the same harsh greetings that to an unknowing listener would be shouts to leave. To Remey these were the same warm greetings she had always heard from the same people who had given her ways to take care of those she loved.

The orphanage had not always been on such solid ground, when Remey was young it was a rarity to get two full meals a day, now? She had worked hard and been able to help enough that the orphanage was considering adding another building. Times had really changed since she was little. These changes had allowed her to have the freedom to become an adventurer and make more money for her family. Just because she now lived somewhere else did not mean she was not still a child of the orphanage, it would always be her home.

After visiting another three stalls and having random herbs or fruits stuffed in to her hands, Remey had sneakily left gold at every single one of them.

Chapter 235 - 235.Visit The Old Man

Remey's feet eventually brought her to the alchemist building, she let herself in through the members entrance and headed up a set of stairs. Some younger members spotted her on the second floor and were dead set on kicking her out the second they saw her. It was obvious that she was not an alchemist in any way.

"This area is for members only! You are trespassing somewhere you do not belong, leave before we call the guards and have you banned for life!" One of three alchemists barely at the age of twenty approached her just at the top of the stairs.

"Who made you a master alchemist huh? You three look like apprentices at best. You can't even enter the third floor you're too dumb still." Remey was not a master of words and chose to insult them instead of explaining that she had indeed been a member longer than they had.

"Go get the master alchemist! We will have you banned for insulting us and trespassing." The tallest of the three stood there blocking the stairs upwards since he could see that Remey was trying to head that way.

"I swear if you don't move in ten seconds I will beat you until you forget what the word alchemy means. Better yet I will knock all the information about cotton fungus from your brain than feed it to you!."

This threat caused the two remaining apprentices to bite their tongues, this intruder was throwing around knowledge on rare ingredients like she knew what they did. "Just because you have heard the name of something doesn't change anything, I bet you can't even tell us what it does!" The apprentice felt that he had just assured his dominance of the wannabe alchemist intruder.

"Really? What idiot wouldn't know?" Remey felt like she would have been getting further if she was talking to a wall than these two apprentices. "Cotton fungus absorbs moisture ten times its own size. If someone like you were to eat it you would become dehydrated and on death's door in a half hour. The only way you could survive is if someone valued your lack of a brain enough to feed you some sky salts." Remey had just recited the knowledge like she had been reading from a textbook.

The perfect description was enough to keep the apprentices at bay for a moment. Not just anyone would have learned such things since the two potion ingredients were rare and did not come from any of the nearby areas. The cotton fungus was only found in the dry desserts past the mountains and the sky salts were found at the tops of mountains themselves near the sea.

"She is exactly right!" The voice of a familiar man echoed through the hallways. "Now let's figure out a proper punishment....hmmm The three of you will be in charge of scrubbing every single cauldron in the rental rooms until they are all shiny and new." The old man finally stood behind the two other apprentices with the third behind him. "Brat what are you doing here? Did you even show them your plaque that you have as a member? I swear you never take it with you when you come here."

The apprentices felt like they had switched worlds somehow, this intruder was actually a member? Even worse, their master knew her well enough to punish them for insulting her? "Well who else would I come to bother? I need to get you to show me more good tricks before you fall in to your grave old man!" The insult was another slap to the apprentices, if they dared to even speak in the time Remey used they would be punished for weeks.

"Oho don't worry, I will find a potion for immortality just so you have to see me every single time you walk through the door." The old man's smile was vicious but his eyes were kind. "What are you three standing around for! Apologize then get off to scrubbing those cauldrons!" The three apprentices each gave Remey a proper apology then ran off. She knew they were not sincere since they did not really know who she was but as long as the annoyance was gone she did not care too much. "Lets go to my own little lab, you can watch as usual." The two of them climbed to the third floor which was reserved for the alchemists who ran the building. Their private alchemy labs were here. Only those with membership and permission could walk this floor. The only other floor that was in the building was the fourth top floor.

The fourth floor was only accessible to the highest ranked alchemists in the building because it was where they stored their research notes. Remey had only been once but had seen a al skill that lets any writing on any paper turn invisible to only the one who wrote it or one that was granted permission. The skill that did this was inscribed on to a special platform and would activate every time there was mana channeled through it. The old man had once told Remey that the founder of the alchemist building possessed this skill and left it for them all to use in the future.

" So how many of those vials have you used on your latest experiment? Any good progress?" Remey and the old man had entered in to a medium sized room full of various tools. There were beakers and test tubes above burners fitted with fire crystals that created small heat sources. The smell of burning herbs was strong but to Remey it was much more welcoming than anyone else would find it. The drying herbs by a small window looked meticulously strung together for maximum quality. Remey remembered the many different varieties she had seen since she had first come to this lab. The large cauldron on the middle of the room was fueled by a large amount of fire crystals at its base. The liquid inside was bubbling constantly showing Remey the various herbs that had been tossed in.

"Eh nothing yet, those stupid merchants need to get moving and bring in wormwood and tulip bulbs so I can mix them in to a potion to boost eyesight. The product I have now is just a poisonous goop." Understandably unhappy with his current state the old man ruffled through various herbs from drawers that took up the whole wall of one side of the room. When Remey was little she believed that these drawers held the herbs that could cure any illness no matter how intense.

'You didn't just come to watch today huh? You look like you visited a decent amount of the stalls like you used to whenever your siblings were sick. "The old man got deadly serious and looked at Remey in the eye, "What's wrong?" He had seen this girl grow up in front of his eyes. She had been a nagging pain for him when she first showed up but eventually her rough personality matched his own along with his friends in the market. The resemblance was so close that a few of them had even started calling him her grandfather. But that was what he would get when a kid would follow him around pestering him about what herbs were good for chills, or fevers, or a runny nose.

"Why would something be wrong? Huh?I can't just come here and bring some stuff I was given." Remey acted stubborn as always but quickly started gathering a beaker and some water from a bucket. She opened the drawers like she had done many times tossing in a few small herbs along with some she had been given while visiting the stalls in the markets. She places the large beaker on to a burner that was being heated by a fire element crystal.

Once the water had started to simmer she opened the jar of honey to pour a bit into the simmering beaker. She pulled two small beakers from another drawer underneath a table and toured the brewed tea in to it making sure none of the large leaves came with the liquid. She shoved the tea in to the old man's hands, "That should fix your throat, you know nobody wants to hear you yelling like that." It had been many years that the two had known each other and Remey had picked up a few tricks. This tea's recipe was the best she could do to help someone who had raised their voice and harmed their vocal cord.

"Only you ever notice that my voice gets rougher after yelling." The old man sipped the tea and enjoyed the sweetness of the honey, "Ha! That old bat had been hiding the best honey from me, I knew it!"

Well why would she want to give it to you after you stepped on her cat's tail, not once , but four times!" The old man could not angry, he had indeed stepped on her cat's tail four times, as far as Remey knew, but it was actually five times now.

Chapter 236 - 236. Another Dinner Guest

"So you can come by the mansion some time to check out our own lab, the building on the side of the mansion is small and I need to know what to add to it to get it working." Remey broke the next silence between sips of tea.

"I knew you wanted something, why do you want that? You accepted you could not make potions years ago." The old man had taken a great deal of time to explain why a brawler would not be able to learn the people skills to control temperature and synthesize the potions. It was not only the process that needed to be followed to create a potion. There needed to be a proper infusion of mana at certain points that would dissolve herbs or cause liquids to evaporate.

These were not the only skills that were needed, some herbs could only be properly stored by using skills that an alchemist system or similar system would have. If Remey had tried to dry out most of the herbs that were in the very room she was drinking tea in, the results would be a useless dried out weed.

"I know that, but i have someone who can use the skills I don't have." She was thinking about Walker who could be her hands while she had the knowledge of what motions and stamps were needed.

"Ahh that boy with you before that wanted the dragon fruit the first time you brought him, he did seem to be fairly caught up in all the herbs."

"Oh that was him using his appraisal skill to look at everything, he is super weird. For some reason the most basic things seem to excite him. I swear he is a chore." Remey so casually references that Walker had been using his appraisal skill, something that Walker had not realized she had picked up at the time and still would not figure out.

"He has an appraisal skill, you sure made an interesting friend. First those angel wings and now pure water from a snow golem..." The old man pondered for some time on what he wanted to do. "I can make a visit your fancy mansion, but only after I sweep that auction clean of pure water. I went through

a lot of trouble to convince that old fool upstairs to give me his ticket. It cost an entire crimson fang root!" The old man nearly choked on his tea as he admitted he had traded such a rare herb for a VIP auction ticket.

"Good then we will drag you back to the mansion after the auction. Our party leader already invited the high priest from the cathedral over so we still will have a bunch of free rooms for you to pick for the night. We will have dinner so you can mooch off us for the night." Remey tried her best to not show that she was excited that the old man would come. She was looking out the window as she said that he could come to dinner as well.

"High priest? Your friend isn't a noble is he? I hate the type, can't stand their high end attitude. They always expect miracle potions from basic ingredients." Remey shook her head no before she replied.

"His father was a guard down here in the lower tier. He just got an interesting system and can do a lot of things. Plus now that we have titles all these nobles and royals are trying t get close with us. It's just another pain, I want to get out on the move again, but since we were asked to go to another kingdom I would rather focus on alchemy for a while."

"Ah it's time!" The old man jumped up and started throwing different herbs in to his pot becoming completely absorbed into what he was making. Remey had seen him like this before and knew he could be at this for hours. She placed down her beaker of tea and left the excess herbs she had been given at the market. Remey snuck through the door and headed out the way she came.

The old man was furiously adding things and mixing while adjusting the temperature. He had seen Remey leave and was rather happy that he had been invited, as far as he was concerned it was just as his friend at the market had teased, he was her grandfather.

Remey made it outside and headed towards the orphanage, she couldn't think of anywhere else to go now that she had taken care of her main goals for heading out in the first place.

'Daily quest: patience is a virtue

The orphans at the local orphanage always take pride in challenging you to a fight. This can cause trouble at times if the user is weak and gives in to the taunts. Fighting in any way will cause a failure of this daily quest.

Requirements:

Resist the taunts of the orphans for one hour

Reward:

20 exp'

"Ugh what? But those monsters need a lesson." Remey was not happy with this, she had been on a huge winning streak in every brawl she got in to with her siblings, now she would have to give it up because of a quest?

She desperately wanted to give up on this daily quest by the nagging feeling that she would be letting the whole entire party down by not taking this quest caused her to bite her lip and deal with it. She walked in to the front yard of the orphanage making note of where all her siblings were. One of the youngest boys ran over to her immediately jumping with all his might to tackle her. Remey expertly caught him and flung him over her shoulder.

"You will need to get bigger before tackling and messing with me at all." Normally Remey would give him a hard lesson with her fist for a more dramatic move, the little boy was stuck in her shoulder powerless. She hadn't even tried to fight him. The other orphans saw this and were totally convince that Remey was baiting them in for a big attack. They would need to bait her out so they could trick her in to their victory.

"Stinky Remey is back!" One of the younger orphans shouted at her trying to get a reaction. Instead all he got was a glare from Remey that stuck him to the spot. Over the years Remey had mastered this glare that would strike fear in to the eyes of any misbehaving younger sibling. It was nearly on par with a mother's glare.

The boy sealed his mouth shut and ran to hide under a bed. If Remey was in a bad mood then they would all need to hide away, she would easily bring down chores as punishment on anyone that was daring enough to cause her trouble.

Remey let go of the boy who had tried to tackle her, he ran off with a stuck out tongue most likely to plan out his next attack with the others. "Weren't you just here the other day? Lin had seen her coming through the door and was a bit frustrated to see Remey back again. "You should be out enjoying the world yet you show up to fuss over us all day. What does your party think when you are away the second you get back?"

"They are busy training or with their own family. Why is it so bad that I am with mine?" Remey still had the feeling that there was a difference between her and the others. This mostly stemmed from the fact that they had their own parents or siblings. Remey had been in the orphanage as long as she could remember, this place was her home and family.

"Yes yes, I know you are the same as my daughter, That is why you need to get out of here and keep growing. I would hate for you to end up tied down afraid to leave here."

Remey was not happy to hear this but she knew the words were out of Lin's love for her. Lin had taken care of every single one of them since they came to the orphanage. Whether they were babies or toddlers each child was immediately a member of Lin's family.

"I just can't sit here and let the orphanage waste away, you all deserve much better and I will make this the best place in the entire kingdom! You want a new school house? I will get it. If you need more clothing, I will buy it. If someone is sick, I will make the medicine. And if anyone dares to harm any of you, I will beat them!" Remey let her feelings cry out to Lin in this moment. Lin had heard this a great many times but now she saw a new light in Remey's eyes. A fire that had grown stronger than ever before.

Chapter 237 - 237. Tantrum

"I have a party behind me. We have so much now that we can afford to invest in a better future for everyone here. If anyone wants to go to the academy for the army I can get them in to the classes. If someone wants to be an alchemist I know a sneaky old man that can get them an apprenticeship. My party has a good relation with the forge and even the tamer's guild. Even the adventurer's guild is an open door to them! If we have so much to give why can't I give it?"

Lin was proud to hear the girl she raised say these things but she also knew the weight that these words carried. The crushing pressure that could suffocate a person if they were not careful. "I hear you, but are you the only one in this family? What will you do when the young ones have grown up? Will you force them to stay and still take your charity? No, You need to be an individual too. You have already done so much, with your party meeting the high priest he looked in to where you were born and raised. He has sent more funds to get the orphanage back up to speed." This was evident in the cleaner front yard and

the new additions already being built on to the orphanage. There were new blankets on every bed and even the floors seemed more shiny.

"I just...what if you need me..." Remey had almost whispered this but Lin was sharp enough to catch it. She had learned the ins and outs of each child she had ever raised and Remey was no different.

Lin placed her hand on Remey's head, "This is still home, and you have done a lot for us. Just don't try to do too much or else you will lose your new family members. You don't have to give up one family for the other, your family just got bigger." Thus was enough to calm Remey down, she had been getting more and more easily aggravated in the past days because she had missed the orphanage. Now that she was there she had thrown herself under as much stress as Lin had when she had just started there years ago.

With her piece said Lin headed off knowing that leaving Remey to think on this was the best course of action, she knew that she could not force Remey to do anything but she could give her the words she needed to understand. Remey herself headed towards their kitchen noticing that the pots and pans that had once been dented and broken were all replaced with perfect new ones. The utensils all looked in good condition and were not the old wood spoons or forks they used to have but metal ones.

Feeling a bit out of place Remey fell in to the familiar motions of making tea, she had done this so many times to keep the younger siblings warm and full of nutrients during the winter that her body could make any tea without her needing to think on it. The smell filled the kitchen and drifted in to the rest of the orphanage. The only other person who had managed to make the tea was Lin and since the younger boys had seen Lin in the bedrooms they had found their target. Remey was always the most distracted while making food or drinks so they would try and strike now!

The smaller boy out of the small group of three snuck up closer and closer hiding behind the entrance. The other two took a position on the opposite side of the door frame waiting for Remey to walk through, unfortunately for them they were too predictable. The nights on watch with the party combined with the days they spent looking for monsters in the plains had given Remey a sharp sense to where things may be hiding.

She was easily snapped out of her daze and focused on the three, she knew the one boy would be back to take another shot, he would never learn. The problem was she couldn't do anything just yet since the quest would be failed if she got in to a fight.

Remey inhaled the sweet and relaxing aroma of tea while she pushed the talk with Lin from her mind. The words that were spoken to her would be something she needed to think about alone, but she felt that there was a heavy truth to them.

"Hmm this kitchen seems so dirty, I really need to find three or four people to clean it top to bottom. I wonder who will volunteer." She had used one of her trump cards, when she was growing up she had always been the one to support Lin in arranging chores. This fear of being given a big job like scrubbing grease out of the kitchen or sweeping all the floors in the building were just two examples of the evil Remey had brought on the younger siblings.

The three boys looked at each other not sure if they could risk it, if they attacked Remey now then they could lose all their free time in the day. How would they go outside to hunt for bugs or play tag if they were too tired from scrubbing pots and pans, it just wasn't possible.

The look they shared was enough to tell each other they were going to back off for now, there would be more chances. Remey was silently grinning knowing that she had scared them off for now. Maybe this not punching thing was not as hard as she expected, all she needed was another half hour or so to complete her daily quest.

"NOOO NO NO NO, I want to play with the it NOW!" There it was, the world's worst part about living with a bunch of younger children; tantrums. The young girl's voice pierced the air like a needle through cloth. Remey had watched her good mood fly off in that instant.

Placing her cup down she left the kitchen only to find that there were two of her siblings fighting over a stuffed bear. "It's my turn! MINE!" The taller girl was viciously trying to tear the bear from her sister's hands so that she could have it for herself while the younger girl was red faced and holding on to it for dear life.

Remey watched the two pull at it knowing that neither was planning to share the stuffed animal at any time. This same fight had happened more times than she could count. She had once gone to the trouble to get a second stuffed bear but it had been ignored in favor of the one currently being brutalized by the two girls.

The second Remey was about to cut in and take the bear a heart stopping tearing sound was heard. "You killed him you killed beary bear!" The younger girl released it and fell in to the floor. Her tears flowed like a river, the other girl just held on to the newly torn bear stunned. The minutes passed and even the older girl was not silently crying since her favorite toy was not broken too.

"You two know better! You need to treat your toys with respect when this happens. What will we do now?" Remey used her hard tone to show how serious she was, the two girls who were crying looked at her in desperation.

"IT'S-sss her Fault!" The younger girl sobbed out these words pointing at the older girl incriminating her.

The other girl looked at Remey with a now equally red face. "No, ITS HER FAULT!"

This annoying repeat scene happened every other day here between two or three of the orphans, it was just part of siblings growing up. "Give me the bear..Now" Remey held out a hand staring down the older girl. If she had not showed the harsh angry tone then the girl would have just run or thrown it and run. However when Remey showed this face and tone they knew not to fool around. The girl handed Remey the stuffed bear.

"You my friend will be staying with me for a vacation while these two learn some respect." Remey tucked the bear in to her cloak and left the two alone.

"She took him away." The older girl was stunned at the loss and lack of punishment. But to the younger girl this was the worst possible punishment, now she would not be able to play with the bear and it was even ripped open showing its stuffing. The two cried more but to Remey this was the tough love they needed.

She made a mental effort not to ask Lisa to sew the bear back to its former glory when she returned, she would also give it a good wash so that its fur might look less dingy. This bear had been around longer than Remey had after all.

Chapter 238 - 238. Pacifist

Once they had calmed down the girls shared what had happened to them with everyone else. Lin naturally overheard all of this and started humming to herself. Remey would normally jump in to punishment seeing these actions, but now she was acting much more mature. This was the exact action Lin would have taken had she found the situation unfolding. Little did she know Remey was biting her lip holding herself back to complete her quest.

Although the nagging feeling that things might just be easier this way was becoming stronger and stronger. Now that she had a small goal in repairing the teddy bear Remey looked at the system finding

that there was only two minutes left until the quest would complete itself. She just needed to make it to the door.

"Thus is MY win stinky Remey!" The same boy as before was running at her now to try and get her leg. He was totally alone and his trump card glare had already been used. She started to move out of reflex to draw her fist back.

"You need a lesson in manners huh!?" Remey wound up standing tall throttling her fist down towards her sibling. The boy realized that Remey was coming down with real force and had a face of terror. He could not stop his motion and would be right in the path of this punch.

Just as the fist was about to connect Remey stopped, "Ha! You thought I would actually get you with everything I had?" The boy softly bumped in to her leg and fell on his butt. "Next time don't shout out your attack, the element of surprise is much better in a real fight."

'Daily quest: patients is a virtue

Requirements:

Resist the taunts for the orphans for one hour- completed

Rewards:

20exp multiplied to 200exp.'

Remey let her fist softly pump his shoulder before she turned to leave out the door. She had finished the quest and felt very proud of herself. She hadn't thrown a single punch or gotten in to a single fight but still had the feeling that she had accomplished her duty as an older sister. Having heard Lin's words she was sure that the orphanage was back on the up and up and would not be in any danger. This was the thing she wanted most and if she continued to work hard then she would be able to give them all the best of lives. Just because Lin said that she did not need to do anything more she couldn't talk Remey out of doing everything.

Patting the small bear she headed back home to the mansion. Her errands were done for the day and her family would be waiting for her to eat dinner. Plus who else would tease Walker for sitting outside all day playing with fire.

When Remey had returned Lisa had jumped at the job of repairing the teddy bear, she even promised it would look as good as new.

With a satisfied look she headed to drag Walker inside before he managed to exhaust all his mana. "Get you butt moving, how else are we going to get to start eating Miss. Hilda's new recipe?!" Remey may not have had a way with words but she got Midnight's attention which was enough to get her running inside. Onyx and Walker were slower but he stood up with a bit of extra effort. "Looking like an old man already huh?"

"Pfft I've been sitting there all day training, what have you been up to?" Walker was still trying to shake out his stiff joints much to Remey's amusements.

"Ey nothing much, I invited the old man from the alchemist guild over for after the auction. He managed to get a ticket and wants to come to dinner. I will have him help me out in the alchemy workshop." Walker was pleasantly surprised that Remey had taken the initiative to get the alchemy workshop up to par for the work they would do in the coming weeks and months.

He was not sure what to say to this and instead nodded as they headed inside for dinner. He could not help but notice that Remey was walking with a bit more bounce in her step, what had put her in such a good mood?

The meal had proven to be a hit, Hilda's new spice blend on the horned rabbit legs would easily become one of her top dishes. Everyone managed to eat way too much and headed off to sleep for an early night.

The morning came early. With the great breakthroughs in their control of the black flames and Midnight's decaying breath Walker had decided that today was a good day to head over to their forge and test out what Midnight could do. The pair found that their forge had been radically changed in the last day.

The wandering blacksmith was asleep at the table, an empty plate still left from the dinner he had been brought the night before. He had been working on strengthening the forge since he had heard he would be able to forge in dragon's flames. This was a fire that could easily cause massive damage to a forge because of the unique mana a dragon added to their flames, every single one was different. This simple fact was a reason that many who would fight against wild dragons would research the elements of said dragon was strong in so they could wear resistant gear and bring effective weapons.

The wandering blacksmith had seen that Midnight had darkness element in her flame breath meaning that there would be a decaying effect. From his experience he knew that such fire could destroy the forge itself due to the wear and tear it put on the metal and tools. If he did not use his best techniques then he would be constantly looking at clumps of rusting metal.

Walker was examining the reinforced forge and the tools that had been inscribed with patterns. The wandering blacksmith had added runes to his tools to give them some added strength as well. His inspections had woken up the wandering blacksmith who was stretching in his chair. Noticing that Walker was looking over the changes he pulled up a hammer and channeled mana through it bringing it down on an anvil. Walker was startled but soon in awe seeing the glow of the hammer meet the anvil and start to glow as well. The two had the same runes carved in to them.

"AH, ehm...good morning there. I brought Midnight in case you wanted to test things out. It will also help her learn how to better control her decaying breath attack." The wandering smith nodded heavily. He also wanted to get some practice in since he had just finished all the reinforcements. He jumped in to action tossing some coal inside the forge.

The wandering smith held out a hand and a small spark of flame flew in to the forge lighting it in an instant. The red flames grew in temperature putting out smoke and heat. He pulled out his bag from a corner and removed two basic iron ingots to test out the forge. Motioning to Midnight it was obvious he wanted her to start adding to the flames.

Midnight moved toward the opening to the forge a bit unsteady since Walker and the wandering blacksmith were staring so intently at her. She puffed up her chest and released a small stream of black flames in to the forge fires. The flames lost their orange yellow glow and were dyed black with wisps of white and some orange. They seemed very unbalanced at first but became much more even every time she puffed in more flames.

The wandering blacksmith started to add his own mana in to the forge which glowed with runes causing the flames to become much more stable. The metal and stones that made up the forge seemed to have

a protective coating of self sustaining mana around them keeping away the decaying effect of her flames. Walker was amazed by the level of skill it took just to prepare the forge.

The wandering blacksmith motioned for Walker, "Do you want me to use my dark flames too?" Walker was not sure why the wandering black smith would want such a thing. But as the blacksmith nodded and Walker had no reason not to oblige.

Walker created a ball of black flames and threw it in to the forge as well. The intensity of the flames grew some, this spurred the wandering blacksmith to add more coal as fuel before he grabbed the metal to begin heating it. The tongs he used to hold it were also glowing with mana. The tiny runes inscribed were something Walker could not even dream to be able to do since they were so small and complicated.

The forge was burning at a great temperature causing them all to break in to a heavy sweat. This did not deter the Wandering blacksmith who was just getting started on his testing.

Chapter 239 - 239. Lifetime?

The wandering blacksmith was incredibly focused while he worked. The world could have been falling around him and he would not even flinch in the slightest. Every so often he would hold a hand out to stop Midnight from adding another breath to the forge so that he could turn the metal to evenly heat it. Walker would also get the same motions from him so that he could have another black flame ball throwing in to the forge. The work was hot and soon Walker had tossed off his cloak covered in sweat.

The white undershirt he wore became caked with coal dust and ash, Midnight lost the shine to her scales as the same dust and ash covered her. They could care less however since they were infected by the focus the wandering blacksmith had. Using the tongs to pull out the nearly melting metal the three saw that there were a significant amount of blackened cracks that had spread over it. The wandering blacksmith was not pleased by this but started to hammer away at the clump of white and black metal. The forge flames were still maintained by Walker who was constantly motioned at to add more coal.

The hammer struck easily fifty times before the metal was thrust once again in to the flames. Midnight was starting to tire after only this short time but it was plain to see that she was not used to keeping her breath at this pace. The wandering blacksmith did not miss this fact and slowed her pace down by adding more coal and having Walker use the black flames more.

' The skill black flame bolt has been learned through repetitive actions using the black flame skill.

Black flame bolt- 2 mana cost

Similar to a regular fire bolt spell the black flame bolt holds the same shape. The black flame bolt will burst on contact with the opponent causing them to be burned and suffer from minor decay. There is no knock back effect from this spell'

Walker had no time to read this notification because the wandering black smith had again taken out the metal to start the hammering process. This time he pulled a sharper spiked tool to start making holes and rounding the metal. After just a few minutes the formerly rectangular metal was shaped in to a circle. It was the base of a necklace.

The newly shaped metal went back in to the forge but this time instead of creating the black flame ball Walker used the black flame bolt skill. It was not completely intentional but he had felt that there was another way to do it. The skill flew in to the forge increasing the temperature more than before which caused the wandering blacksmith to pull the metal in to the front. He was an expert at controlling temperature, the sudden change in Walker's skill could not phase him.

This process continued for a few more moments before the flames died down and the wandering blacksmith grabbed a few smaller spiked tools. He pulled the metal out and started adding more holes until a chain was formed from the necklace, there was one larger section with an indent that had not been forced all the way through. This was a chain necklace that could hold a single gem. Walker was amazed that a chain had been made in this way, from what he had known they were formed piece by piece not molded out of a whole piece of metal.

This was definitely a very rare occurrence in the forging world, if the chain had been molded from just one piece of metal would that mean that mana could flow through more smoothly than multiple pieces being shaped together and bent in to a chain shape?

The thought was one that not everyone would realize but having seen the runes the wandering blacksmith had carved in to the tools the theory was sound. Just learning this one technique should be able to enhance the items effect multiple times over.

The wandering blacksmith rushed the now almost complete necklace to the forge and had Midnight and Walker increase their flames much much more. The fire was hotter than it had been just second ago but it was only a temporary experience. The necklace was again pulled out of the flames but this time were dunked in to a vat of warmed oils that the wandering blacksmith had prepared. The oil sizzled violently

as it cooled but the wandering smith did not flinch away as it did so. He was used to this after years and years of cooling forged items.

The necklace was dunked in to four other vats of oils until the heat had almost dissipated completely. Without resting for even a moment the wandering blacksmith laid it on a table and picked up a small file. He went through each link in the chain removing burrs and any small deficiencies in the metal. There was no shine to this necklace but instead a dark hue that covered the entire piece of iron.

Midnight and Walker witnessed the rapid work of the wandering blacksmith for almost an hour before the files and other small tools were placed down. The final product was a fine chained necklace with one large link perfectly fitted for a gem or mana crystal. The time it had taken to create this was so short that Walker could easily say this was the fastest blacksmith in the entire country.

Walker had nothing to say in the moment so instead he used his all around appraisal skill to check out what their creation was all about.

' Black iron necklace

+6mdef

Decay resistance

Lifetime- 20 minutes'

"What does lifetime mean?" Walker was lost at this new addition to the description. He was staring intently at the necklace and so was the wandering smith. The look of displeasure was clearly written in his features. Walker had no idea what seemed to make him so upset over this necklace. It was very finely made and even looked pretty nice, sure the color was not shiny and flashy but it was still very good. To five decay resistance and also a decent amount of al defense this item would sell very well in any gear shop.

Midnight was resting on the floor trying to get her breath back, this one instance of forging had really taken it out of her. She needed plenty of time to recover her stamina before they even thought about trying again.

Walker soon noticed that the black hue on the necklace was starting to get darker. Was this the darkness elemental mana that had been adding to the forging process? The wandering blacksmith was looking more and more unhappy as the minutes passed but his eyes never left the necklace for a second, he was intent on analyzing every single feature. Walker stood by ready for any change or reaction.

Twenty minutes had finally passed and the hue on the necklace had become so strong that one wouldn't even be able to tell that it had ever had a silver iron color before. Small cracks formed in the chain links that held it all together and the necklace broke apart on the worktable. Walker stared open mouth at this. "Failed" The soft rough voice of the wandering smith was the most surprising thing he had heard today. There was only one word but it spoke volumes. Was this what the appraisal meant by lifetime twenty minutes? It would only last for twenty minutes before decaying and falling in to pieces?

The three of them had just spent a huge amount of effort on this one thing to have it fall in to nothing. The wandering blacksmith only sat for another moment before he pulled out another few tools from his bag and started to carve another rune in to the still hot forge. It would seem that there was something missing from his preparations. The darkness mana that became fused with the metal had caused it to degrade in just minutes instead of lasting like a normal piece of gear.

Walker wondered if the wandering blacksmith had faced similar issues forging in magma, the temperature would have been so hot that it could have turned any material in to melted nothingness within just seconds. Walker watched the runes being carved on the forge, then the tools, and eleven on to the anvil. The process was captivating since the wandering blacksmith was so elegant and refined in his style that every movement was perfect. There was not a single error in how he moved and carved away the small bits of metal.

After he had finished Midnight had regained most of her mana and had enough energy to look at the changed the wandering blacksmith had made. She did not understand what they were but the feeling of resistance coming from them now made her think that the flames could not do anything against the tools.

Walker noticed that the wandering blacksmith had grabbed another piece of iron, it was time for the second test.

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Chapter 240 - 240. Second Try

The method started out the same as the first, the wandering blacksmith started with coal and a slower addition of Midnight's decaying flames. He had Walker use his black flame bolt spell more than before to boost the temperature. The things he had learned before were more than meets the eye. The control of the heat had become much more fine and even the movement of the metal was slower and more careful. The entire process seemed like it was taking longer but since the flames kept a very steady pace they did not have any fear that anything would go wrong.

The metal was pulled out and the wandering blacksmith started with the hammering, he had reduced the amount of hits to the metal this time and used more strength to get the same shapes. The metal was thrust in to the flames having barely cooled down at all. This led to Midnight and Walker not needing to add their flames as much as the previous time. There was also less coal used. The entire process has already become double as efficient than before.

The metal was already being shaped by the smith and the familiar shape of the necklace was starting to take shape. The pointed tools that had made the chain links had been dipped in to oils before being used causing bits to burn off and stain the metal. However this did not seem to influence the temperature in any negative way, only speed up how fast the shape came to be.

After just a short time back in the flames the wandering blacksmith was already cooling the second necklace in the oils. The process took longer to cool than before but the results were already much different. The shine of the grey silver iron was much brighter and instead of a black hue there were black thin lines through the entire piece. They were all perfectly spaced without an error in their pattern

The filing had begun and this time Midnight who had some remaining energy was watching the entire process. The burrs were removed and even some of the edges on the larger parts were sanded away. The wandering blacksmith even started to polish the pieces directly after, it was clearly still holding some temperature but the polish made it shine even brighter. After some time the wandering blacksmith had laid the necklace down on the work table.

Walker could say this was a completely different piece of great than they had seen before, it shines with a splendor that spoke of high quality skills and effort. The black colored lines and deepened through the polishing making the chains look like two different metals had been woven together like thread. Walker worried that this too would have the strange lifetime that the other one had so he hesitated a bit using his all around appraisal skill.

' Shadow iron necklace

+8Mdef, + 4Def

Strong decay resistance

One slot available for mana crystal gem'

There was no lifetime! They had definitely succeeded, there was stronger al defense and even some regular defense. Not only that but the decay resistance was strong. The new thing that struck him was that the necklace said that it had a slot open for a mana crystal get. What was this?

Walker tried to sift through his memories but the only thing that seemed close to what a mana crystal gem would be were the crystal shards he had. He pulled a handful from his inventory and asked the wandering blacksmith, "Are these at all related to the mana crystal gems that could fit in to the necklace?" Without even a hesitation the wandering blacksmith snatched the shards from Walker and grabbed a small mold from his stack of tools.

The work had started again but this time instead of heating anything the wandering blacksmith was taking the shards and placing them between the two parts of the mold. There were many carvings on the molds that glowed as he worked. The patterns glowed stronger or weaker when the wandering blacksmith would adjust the shards he was flashing within. Soon a small clack and click sound reverberated through the forge that signified that the two parts of the mold had become one.

Hammering away to make sure they were firmly together the wandering blacksmith then lift the entire mold in to the forge. This sight was worrying since Walker expected the crystal shard to be damaged by the flames. However to his surprise there were not cracking sounds at all, instead it sounded like someone had just brought a kettle to a roaring boil.

The wandering blacksmith was using various tools to take the mold here and there causing the glowing runes to brighten or darken. This was the strangest process in a forge that Walker had ever witnessed, he had yet to hear of this technique and figured that the shards would just be fitted in to a piece of equipment or melted in to it to add a mana storing effect. Instead they were somehow being molded on to a new shape.

After almost a full hour of this the wandering blacksmith hefted the mold from the fire and dropped it on the floor. The coal dust around it slightly burned and his gloves had smoked a bit too. The wandering blacksmith grabbed the high water elemental crystal from the box and softly touched the mold. The heat within it vanished in mere minutes. The sounds of metal groaning were fairly loud but did not seem to be causing any damage at all.

Putting away the high water elemental crystal the wandering blacksmith approached the mold with a large hammer he had used to forge before. He wound up and let the hammer slam in to the mold with a deafening clang. The vibrating metal separated from each other again becoming two pieces of the mold. Inside a small multi faceted gem was visible.

This gem had the same clearness and appearance as the crystal shards before but Walker could feel the draw of mana in the air. This gem was already absorbing mana even though it was not attached to anything at all. The wandering blacksmith worked fast affixing the gem to the necklace. Walker was curious how the necklace had changed and checked the appraisal. The only difference that had shown one once simple line in the description.

'Mana storage: 0/20'

The gem had given the necklace the ability to store away a whole twenty mana! The wandering blacksmith had just shaped the crystal shard Walker had shown him in to a mana storage gem. This was exactly what Walker wanted in their gear so that they would not need to worry about using up all their mana while fighting any battles. If all of the gear the wandering blacksmith made came with this mana storage gem inlay then they would easily double their party strength.

"Good" The wandering blacksmith stared at the shadow iron necklace giving it a soft nod. He had said his second word in approval of this creation. The previous problems that caused the decaying effect on the first test were gone and how they could craft using Midnight flames. Walker was even included which seemed to remove a lot of stress from Midnight who had not gotten used to the use of her decaying flame breath. Crafting all of these gears that they wanted would take a much longer time than he expected but would be well worth it by the end of their time before their journey.

Walker looked at the wandering blacksmith who held out the necklace to him, "You want me to wear it?" his question was greeted with a shake of the head. "Then you want me to give it to someone?" Another shake of the head. "Sell it?" There was a nod this time. It seemed that the wandering blacksmith wanted this to be sold so that the party could get better material for the auction. This was

not necessarily out of the wandering blacksmith's good faith but instead came from his desire to craft with more materials. He had discovered a new way to forge that he had yet to use and wanted more. It was almost like an intense addiction.

Walker smiled knowing that in the end he would see many more amazing things. This would only be the start of their crafting experiences but for now it was time for them all to rest. Surprisingly after Walker had stored away the necklace the wandering blacksmith followed him in to the mansion. The three headed toward the bathing area in the mansion. It was a fairly large area made out of man water mana crystals to promote the flow of water. The fire crystals had been worked in to the bath as well to maintain proper temperature.

For the first time since he arrived the wandering blacksmith would be scrubbing away the layers of ash and coal dust. Seeing that this was a chance to get clean himself the three of them got rid of the ash and coal dust in turn. Walker helped out Midnight who could not shrub at the scales between her wings. Normally she was much cleaner but today there was no avoiding the dust that seemed to get everywhere in a blink of an eye. Feeling refreshed and clean Walker had changed in to some basic clothing. He also had found that the wandering blacksmith had put on a second pair of identical clothing he was wearing before, although these were spotless.

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