

## Master 621

### Chapter 621 - 621. Silent Flames

Midnight had watched Gil and Walker leave her behind and she focused her attention on the royal guard. She was very happy to be called lady and miss by the royal guard since she had not been called these fancy titles before. Most others would just call her little dragon or the dragon or just use her name. The new titles gave her pride a boost.

"I'm unsure if you are able to fully grasp the process, but our blacksmiths have been working on many things, and testing a new form of fire on them would be an incredible boost to learning and forging processes." The royal guard walked toward a staircase that descended toward a very hot area while he spoke.

Midnight enjoyed the heat that was coming from the space since her dragon blood preferred warm temperatures. The lower they descended the more the heat grew and she began to wonder how the royal guard was not over heating. She had learned that humans and other races did not have the same hot and cold tolerances as she did and that they would become sick.

Her worry must have shown in her eyes so much that the royal guard began to fish around his neck. "This is an ever cool pendant. We make them from ice jade. It only forms in very cold caves over many many years." The pendant had water runes carved in to it and appeared to be a snowflake shape. Midnight could feel the water elemental mana radiating around it.

This charm would work wonders for many of the party and Midnight wanted to get some for later, "Miss Midnight, if you require it I can have some retrieved. Would one be enough?" The royal guard understood that her gaze was saying that she was interested in it. He didn't expect a dragon to need such an item but didn't want to offend her.

Midnight stopped for a moment and scratched six lines in the ground with her claws. "Does-does that mean you would like six pendants?" The royal guard was surprised to see how Midnight went about communicating this. When she nodded her head and gave a huff he knew that this was exactly what she wanted. "Then I will have them prepared for you as soon as possible."

The two continued the descent and the royal guard pulled an orb from his belt to communicate the needs. Midnight was very pleased with the discovery since she knew it would make her family more

comfortable when in the forge. She had seen the many beads of sweat drip from Walker as the two had worked with the wandering blacksmith.

When the two finally came to the bottom of the steps there were many sounds of shoveling and even a spraying sound. The reaction to these sounds was always one exactly like flames in the wind. There were also large grinding sounds that Midnight related to the gears she had already seen and heard. Other than that she could feel the heat and steam had become much more dense around her.

The First dwarf she saw rushing around was covered in coal dust. Completely from head to toe looked like they belonged within the shadows themselves. Midnight almost mistook them for someone using the shadow wrapping skill that she had but quickly smelled the coal. She looked further to find that the dwarf was rushing towards a mine car full of coal.

Looking further she saw that the entire area underneath the high forge was supported by massive stone pillars. The floor was covered in metal tracks that allowed the mine cars the ability to travel unimpeded. Many dwarves were pushing the mine carts here and there to different large furnaces. Some were attached to massive tanks to which water was provided to while others were just fire and exhaust pipes. This was how every forge received the steam, fire, heat, and any other source of energy it needed.

"Miss Midnight, the furnace we will ask you to assist with is over to this side." The royal guard pointed out a reinforced furnace with much more material and runes carved upon it. "I will leave you in the care of the fire breather in charge of this furnace." The royal guard motioned to a dwarf covered in less coal than the others near the furnace.

"So you are the dragon hm? Come show me that dragon fire your kind is famous for and I will show you what I can do too." The dwarf smirked in arrogance and it made Midnight want to breathe flames at him at that moment. Instead, she huffed and stood taller, she knew that Walker would not be happy with her if she did something foolish like that.

The other dwarves that had been feeding the furnace were caught up for a moment looking at her so Midnight flapped her wings a little to show off her scales. It was an action that caught even more attention from those running by and she loved every second of it. She was a dragon and her presence should be known.

"So, show me what you've got." The fire breather motioned to the open furnace. "No more coal, back away you stokers and make way for the dragon fire! Alert testing for thirty two that there will be a

unique flame!" The fire breather gave these orders and any around that were watching instantly fell in to their given tasks.

Midnight moved toward the flames while building up her own. She could feel the mana she had control of condensing in her so she could use her decaying flames. Chest puffed up with the large intake of air as she breathed in and the sounds around her seemed to lessen. When Midnight paused it was as if the entire furnace area had become silent.

#### Chapter 622 - 622. Fire Breathing

When Midnight released the built up flames the entire furnace area came back to life. The darkness that came with the fire she breathed changed the color of all the flames within the single furnace. There were many surprised to see the flames become a mix of black and orange along with many who kept their distance even more.

"Ha! That is spectacular. Decaying flames? I haven't seen these since I was a child. No dwarf could ever breathe these. I love when dragons come and show off their flames." The fire breather was ecstatic to see the decaying flames. "Let the testing forge know they will be making darkness element resistant armor and weapons. We can fill an order for the swamps."

The fire breather knew that the poisons and decay in the swamps would be a massive danger to most. This was why there was also an outstanding order for any armor or weapons made that could resist some of these things. The adventurers and travelers that needed to go through the swamps would pay a hefty price for them.

Midnight had breathed a full breath of flame out and stepped back as the furnace was closed. She was very proud to see that the dwarves were all in awe of the flames she added to the forge. However, she was still a little annoyed that the fire breather was not as amazed as the others. She could tell he was more stubborn and wanted to show off too.

With a huff and a simple nod to the furnace, Midnight showed a look of challenge to the fire breather. "You want to see what I can do? Are you sure you are ready to see another race breathe flames? I bet you won't even know what hit you."

The dwarf pulled a large canteen from his hip and took a deep sip. The liquid he had consumed puffed in his cheeks and the furnace was opened to show the brilliant black and orange flames. The fire breather lifted a small stick like object with a red fire elemental mana crystal on the end.

Without any warning the dwarf breathed out, spitting the liquid he had drunk a moment ago. The mist caught fire with the help of the fire elemental mana crystal and caused a brilliant yellow and orange flame to spread out and in to the furnace.

The flames danced and mixed becoming brighter and increasing in temperature. The flames escaped the dwarfs' lips for a solid minute before he ended them and the furnace closed again. "What did you think of that? Dwarves can breath some pretty interesting flames huh?"

Midnight had to admit that the dwarf had just breathed some brilliant flames. Luckily for her, no dwarf could hear her thoughts without Onyx there to speak for her. She was able to keep this to herself and act indifferent.

"Us fire breathers use our highly concentrated alcohol brewed in some unique caves to make our own flames. The mana we add to them pushes the temperature many times hotter and is perfect for forging. There are even fire breathers that can add other elements to their flames. We once had a frozen flame breather system. That was wild."

Midnight was intrigued by the idea of breathing icy flames. This would be incredibly useful when she fought since she would be able to use them more easily around her party members. She could also use them to stop an opponent in their tracks or change the terrain. If she did this with the decaying flames then she would cause massive damage to the area around her along with the party.

Seeing that Midnight began to become interested, the fire breather knew it was because he had mentioned different kinds of flames and continued, "We have had dwarves with elemental affinities that changed their flames. The earth fire breath that one dwarf had was incredibly strange, it was silver like metal and caused things to rust faster. Even organic materials seemed to become slightly rusty."

The dwarf thought harder for what he knew of the breathed flames, "There were light elemental flames that gave armors the ability to flash with light and blind opponent. Oh, the wind flames were interesting because they were a combination of two manas. The fire elemental mana was pushed to a higher temperature due to the wind elemental mana added. That was a sight to see."

Midnight was soaking all of this up. She had only learned the decaying flames and was sure she could learn more. She was a dragon champion and there was no elemental mana crystal she could not consume. It only went to say that if she trained she would be able to breathe every kind of elemental

flame. Thinking of this she made note to ask Walker about this kind of training when she was able to do so.

She fell in to a rhythm with the fire breather and ended up competing for a little while to see who could breathe a flame the longest. Midnight was taking it as training since she had not used her flames that much due to the dangers. However, here she could use them as much as she wanted without any worry.

"Miss Midnight, you have been requested in the forge. Could you please come with me?" The royal guard appeared yet again only two or three hours after she had come down. She was a little unhappy to be taken from the fire but she also saw that the royal guard came with the ice jade pendants and was able to forgive him in a second.

"What? The work day isn't over. We need her for more flames." The fire breather didn't want to see her go.

"I see the flames have been added and are mixed well. You should be able to keep those black flames burning for another ten hours with the right care. Continue your work." The royal guard shot down the fire breather and began to guide Midnight again. The work continued without any delay, there was too much to focus on, and arguing would only interrupt the process.

#### Chapter 623 - 623. Like Minds

Walker and Gil had been receiving a tour of Greys' forging area. There were many models and plans up on the walls. The spider golem they had been told about was in pieces and there were many smaller spider golems around it that were not active. Walker could tell that it would be able to take a piece of copper and carve it in to wire but he wasn't sure how it would do this. He just knew that it could because of the shapes and designs.

"You like the spider golems? I have a decent amount made for copper threads. They keep getting denied because they are too life like but that is what makes them better than other golems. They can catch those pesky cave rats that try and burrow in to the food stores. And when we clean up the webs we can use them for many other things." Grey had a good point.

"Wouldn't they still cause some trouble if they got in to anyone's homes? Why not find a way to restrict them so that they stay in one place all the time?" Gil wasn't sure why Grey wanted them to be so life like and follow a normal spider's actions.

"That would take away from the feeling they have. They would just be machines. That is pointless. I want a golem that you can't tell is different from you or me. Add a sentient weapon to control it and then you have a real life sentient golem able to think for itself and only needs mana to survive along with basic repairs, How could I not want that?"

"That would be pretty interesting. I know that the dwarf pursuit of sentient weapons and armors is the main goal of every crafter but making a sentient golem sounds like it would be able to stand next to you rather than just follow orders." Walker was very interested in this idea. He could get a lot more done with another thinking companion than one that could only follow an order and nothing else.

"Exactly. Imagine what that would be like. It wouldn't need food so it could fight and build for as long as it needed. It could learn to repair itself and return to battle. Or it could store memories and advise on things properly based off of past events." Grey was becoming much more animated as he spoke of his dreams and goals. It was a look in to why he was so excentric of a crafter.

Grey scooped up some round balls the size of fists. "Here here, these are some of the better spider golems I made. They can be set to live in a certain area and can gather mana from the air to fuel themselves. I'm sure you will enjoy having them around. Just make sure you drop some blood on their cores so they recognize you as their master." Grey was glad to find that Walker understood his goals and wanted to share his brilliance.

Walker couldn't say now and took the three spider golems, when he stored them away he saw a glint in Greys' eyes. "That spatial you have can hold a lot right? Like, multiple golems?" Grey was beginning to think of the possibilities Walker had.

"I really haven't pushed it to the limit but I can't just empty things in and out easily. The process of storing things means I need to touch them. The process of taking things out means I need to actively think about it and touch them as well. So I can pull large items in and out but it isn't like I can just open my inventory and pour everything out. If I don't group things like coins together or bones then I would have to take every single one out separately." Walker had long realized this and always made it a habit to group items together.

"So taking a few more golems with you would be fine as long as you took them out separately. That is very interesting. I may have more for you later." Grey was thinking about giving Walker an army of golems but knew that it wouldn't work the way he envisioned. Walker would need to be stationary to

slowly pull them all from his inventory. However, if Grey gave him a small number then they could be taken out when necessary.

"I see what he's getting at. You could carry around companions basically. If you have golems then they can jump in to battle in an instant making us even stronger as a group. Or you could transport them so they won't use any mana and can function longer where you bring them." Gil was seeing the world of possibility that Grey was seeing and wanted to add to it as well.

"You two know what I am talking about. Come meet some of the apprentices. They could learn a thing or two about how to think from you." Grey was ecstatic to have intuitive minds even if they were not golem builders.

Grey stopped fiddling with things on the table and stuffed a few parts and tools in to his belt before he rushed deeper in to the golem forging area. He led them to a larger open space where many younger dwarves were working on their own projects at work tables or at smaller forge fires.

When grey entered there was a visible tension that came through the room. They all knew that when he appeared they were most likely being sent for materials. Grey would often go to an apprentice with a slip of paper that would send them on a journey to a different kingdom or area to harvest or buy materials. It was a constant fear since it would mean their project would need to pause for them to return and they would lose more time to learn.

#### Chapter 624 - 624. Prototypes

Walker and Gil had their head on a swivel. They saw that many of the apprentices were working on unique golems. Unlike the same mass produced golems they had seen as guards and patrols on the surface and so far in the caves, these were all prototype experiments.

"My apprentices are not allowed to use any existing design without building it themselves and modifying it. I hate the same thing done over and over, there is no point and it creates a stagnant future." Grey looked like he was about to spit at the idea of making the same golems over and over. It was clear that there was another place in the high forge that created the parts for the normal golems.

"Walker, look. That golem over there is being made in to a serpent." Gil had spotted a golem with many interlocking segments. The large head of a snake at the front gave it away and made it very interesting.

"You found that interesting? It is a common challenge to take on since the apprentice needs to perfectly build each [art to lock in and flow properly. Only five or six have apprentices attempted and succeeded all based them on different serpent or snake monsters. That is a model of the giant swamp python. I believe an adolescent model to be exact." Grey had posed the challenge a long time ago since it was a good chance to learn about how parts needed to mech perfectly to get the optimal design.

"I really don't get how all the gears and parts come together. I am a little out of my depth since we don't use things like this in our kingdom. But we also rely on more. I wonder what else you could make in to a golem like that." Walker was looking at many other golems and found that an apprentice making a small bird golem was working on the wings.

"How are the hollow tin feathers going? Are they light enough?" Grey knew exactly what the apprentice was working on and the apprentice jumped when being spoken to. They had believed they were going to be told to go get materials but instead were being asked about their work which brought a serious and business like demeanor to them.

"The feathers are light enough for flight but are easily bent by force. I want them to be stronger but I can not find a way to do it. I also don't know if they will work in the strong winds of plains or mountains. Using them for communication could be challenging." The apprentice had been testing multiple ways to make the feathers stable for flight but found they were too heavy, brittle, light, or even flammable.

"Try adding more iron to the alloy mix. They overlap the feathers to give them support and tell me how they work. I expect you to have the problem solved in a month. You have the ability." Grey walked on but the look of determination the apprentice had after receiving advice was more than he had prior.

"I didn't know you have golems that could fly. I think that would be a sight to see." Gil was imagining the small clicking gears in a tiny bird as it flapped through the air.

"We have made some but they always fail sooner than others. There are higher mana requirements for flight than for those on the ground. It comes down to the faster movements required to keep something in the air. The golem that apprentice is making is the most efficient yet if it can fly and survive the process." Grey spoke like this was an average thing but in reality, it was a breakthrough that could help the dwarves with their communication to other kingdoms and merchants.

"Miss Midnight, your party members are over there touring the apprentices with master Grey. Thank you for your assistance in lighting a unique forge fire for us." The royal guard gave a slight bow to Midnight after putting the six ice jade charms around her neck. She proceeded to prance through the



work area drawing attention from nearly every single apprentice who had been at work just a moment ago.

"Sorry to call you away, I know you were probably having fun with the fire down there. But Grey has decided he needs a model to craft a dragon golem after and you win as the best dragon around." Walker made sure to praise Midnight so that she would be happier to help. Yet, it didn't appear that it was needed because Midnight was already in an outstanding mood from the experiences and learning at the furnaces.

"You look like you found some nice jewelry. You will need to have Onyx explain them to us later." Gil was examining the ice jade pendants around her neck and could feel the cool feeling around Midnight. He knew that there was more to them than he could see and wanted an answer right away, but he held himself back since there was more to do at the moment.

"Yes! You will be the perfect model. I can copy the shapes of your scales and allow them to fall away when damaged. Your wings will be perfect for my experiments if I want the golem to fly like a real dragon. I wonder if I can add elemental mana crystals to add flames like you can breathe. This will be a lot of fun!" Grey saw Midnight and knew that his decision to make a dragon golem with the qualities of a shedding golem was correct.

Midnight was confused but knew that this was a good thing. She could tell that Grey was impressed by her and that was really all she needed. "The golem he is making is something that would be unique due to the model he makes it after. Meaning it will almost be as brilliant looking as you." Walker made sure to get Midnight fully invested in this before Grey tried anything else. Seeing her head raise higher he knew he succeeded.

#### Chapter 625 - 625. Apprentice Errands

Midnight stood tall and extended her wings. She was proud to show off how she looked and what she could do. "I see, wings span may need an increase due to age. Scales are single layer but higher toughness. I can make it a double layer of less toughness with a base. Tail is not segmented but can be if hidden with scales." Grey began to mumble constantly.

"Paper and quills, Now!" Two of the apprentices scrambled for the items Grey needed. They rushed to him handing them to him and a third pushed a rolling counter top to him. They knew that they could work even longer without being sent off if they were in good standing with him. It was always those that made him annoyed or angry that would be forced to fetch materials first.

Walker examined the incredibly detailed blue print that Grey was writing. "You have a skill that measures things just by looking at them. My younger sister has one too. That's amazing. I didn't expect a golem builder to have it, but it does make sense." Walker knew that he was basically speaking to himself but he said it out loud anyways.

The diagram being drawn out was already coming together and showing the cross sections and possible sizes. Walker had the feeling that the skill that Grey was using to draw detailed blueprints without any tools was much more powerful than he would expect. The simple fact that Grey could just create it and hand it out in a few minutes was enough proof of this.

"Hmm, that's the outer design. I need to work on the mechanical insides. The core would be at the center and inlays for the elemental crystals along the neck. It is all pretty simple so far. I will take another day or so to get it better." Walker and Gil were already stunned with what they saw. As far as Midnight knew she was looking at a drawn sketch of herself with a few differences here and there, the quality was superb in just a few moments.

"That was way faster than I have ever seen anyone sketch out a basic plan. Not that this could even be called basic, It's art." Gil had only seen such great quality drawing on walls.

"Art? This is nothing. You saw the designs on my walls. This is all necessary to the building process. You should see the models of the insides. They are much more detailed." Grey just shook his head at them and rolled the basic diagram up for later.

"Now I will need materials. Let's see if anyone can impress me and earn the right to go looking for materials." Grey stood in the middle of the work shop for his apprentices which had gone silent. Not even a single apprentice dared to move for fear that it would draw attention.

Grey surveyed the room for something that appeared interesting. "What are you working on there? Is that a normal golem?" Grey saw a golem that appeared to be a base of the usual patrol golems.

The apprentice dropped his tools in shock and was scrambling to grab blue prints and drawings. "Well? Is it? Or is it now?" Walker and Gil were equally silent at Greys' outburst. Midnight just pranced along behind them in her own world since she had been pleased by the drawing of her.

"No, Master builder. It is my prototype for the new fire extinguishing and now slime extermination golem. It would be for the mines specifically. See, there are tanks to hold potions or water and mana powered nozzles to spray a hundred feet. The key is pressure from the moving gears."

The apprentice was opening multiple drawings and designs to show Grey what he had accomplished. "You want this in the mines? And what of the release of the pressure when it is not being used? Or will it always spray water nonstop? Start over and fix the problem." Grey was unforgiving. He was not going to let something that could blow up in to the mines under his name.

"Holy lord, that would have caused a cave in for sure." Gil had been warned by Walker not to use fire elemental arrows in the caves in case they caused some form of an explosion which would cause a cave in as well.

"Exactly, it would have ruined a perfect;y good golem for no reason if I let this out." Grey made Walker and Gil double take hearing this.

'What about the miners' safety and the materials lost?' Walker spoke curiously, but Grey had already moved on to the next nearby apprentice. "I think this is where the eccentric thing comes in." Waker knew that he wasn't going to make much more progress and just followed Grey onwards.

"This thing is?" Grey motioned toward a strange model in the shape of a turtle shell.

"Ehm, Master builder, this is my idea for a fortress type golem. We can build it hollow on the inside to house many small golems. If possible insect type. The shell is the shape of a turtle so that it will have high defense and can dispense its' army anywhere. I need to work on the limbs to strengthen them to carry the shell. It costs a lot of mana but can use elemental mana crystals in spikes on the shell to draw it in."

The apprentice spoke slowly as if they were giving themselves a pep talk as they went. Grey was completely silent while circling the model on the work table. He opened some plans for inner designs along with the suggested insect type golems for the inside to carry as a portable army. After some hmms and mhhms, Grey appeared to finally have found an answer for the apprentice.

Chapter 626 - 626. Sent For Materials

"The legs will need to be filled with many supports. They will have to be the toughest possible alloy we have if you want it to go in to battle. Elemental mana crystal spikes are easy enough as well. We have

plenty to fashion in to spikes. The mana core will be tough. We will need to design a network of them so they can power every aspect." Grey was looking at the designs and blue prints much more carefully.

"Why not just use runes to speed up the mana attraction around the spikes. I might not know how runes work since I haven't started to learn them. But I know what their purposes usually are." Walker wasn't sure why carving them all over a large shell would be a problem.

"That's what we will do. It will take weeks to carve one properly over the curved surface but it will be worth the efficiency we gain." Grey clapped Walker on the shoulder sending him stumbling to the side.

"You can head to the mines and request a list of refined ingots for this project and what I will need." Grey scribbled a long list down and gave it to the apprentice to take with him. The look of joy that the apprentice wasn't being sent away from the city was all too plain on his face.

Gils' attention had been caught on something from across the room. "I have never seen a monster like that. What is that golem based off of?" Grey turned around and saw what Gil was gazing at.

"Come and look what we have. It could be the lucky apprentice who gets to travel the world." Grey knew that Gil had just found something interesting but wanted to wait for the heroes to make their opinions now.

"I haven't seen a monster like that either. Is it from farther away?" The apprentice that was hard at work on their creation found Grey and the three heroes looking over his shoulder.

"Um! Hello, Master builder. Is there anything you need?" The apprentice had been so deep in focus that he could not have noticed them. However, his work was so detailed and minute that each tiny touch didn't make a sound.

"If I remember you started this project seven months ago and you have only created one thing. Explain to our guests the details." Grey gave a small push and let the heroes take the lead.

"Yes! This is modeled after a night stalker panther. They are very rare monsters that reside in between the swamps and the ruins. They are very secretive monsters and kill in an instant. They would be assassins in animal form." The apprentice shared a few drawings of these night stalker panthers.

"The claws are incredibly sharp and the teeth are very sharp as well. They could tear apart any prey defeating them in an instant. They also normally have dark fur that hides them away from the naked eye. Many hunters can never get a sight of them." This interested Gil very much. He had hunted many animals and monsters but never one that he could not see at all.

"The scariest part about them is the fact that they have very dense bones for something that moves so quietly. They can cut and tear through very tough defenses and take a hard hit because of this." The last part summed up an ultimate predator. This night stalker panther was clearly a very tough opponent.

"I spent most of my savings on the bones to use as the base before I coated them in metal alloys. It allows me to build in the gears and mana systems without sacrificing the proper design. The rest of the parts are small gears. The claws themselves have forty parts each so that they can shred through something more easily."

Grey was pondering all of this. "The design and detail required to make it worthless as a mass production unit. However, it is ideal for special assignments that other columns could not do. Can a pelt be fitted over it and darkness elemental runes carved in to it to add more to its' sneaking abilities?" Walker and Gil had thought Grey would actually let them ask questions but this was already out the window since Grey had become interested.

"I should be able to carve the runes on the larger [arts and the pelt can be stretched over it with some proper designing." The apprentice confirmed this and waited for the response.

"Then you may leave and find this pelt. I also need some other materials for my projects. I have a list on my work bench. Be back in two months." The apprentice looked like he had been scolded and sent away. However, Grey saw this as a valuable real life experience yet, others did not.

"How far will he need to go that he is getting two months?" Walker couldn't help but think this is way too long to be sent out for materials.

"That panther pelt he needs is only sold by one merchant group that travels through the swamps instead of around. They are incredibly hard to get. He'll need a month to find them and might need to travel with them for a time to get the materials needed." Grey had this memorized due to his many years of material hunting.

"I don't think we would be doing such a thing. That could be extremely dangerous. The swamps are not a place for anyone to be. It's surprising that you know a merchant group that travels through there." Walker was curious how this would happen. Grey somehow knew the only merchants that went through the swamp lands directly.

"Well, I was not always cooped up here. Before I invented a new golem I was always looking for a new material or a new design inspiration. I traveled." Grey had long retired from traveling but it was still a fresh memory.

#### Chapter 627 - 627. Inspiration

"The best place for inspiration was the ocean side. Do you know how many weird shaped monsters live on the beach or in the water? They are completely different from those underground or the surface. The mountains can't compare either." Grey was feeling the memories flow as he spoke.

The apprentice realized that Grey was caught up in his memories and began to carefully work on the small details again. This was unnoticed by Grey who continued on with his inspirations, "The ocean was amazon. It was terrifying since it never looked to end but after I developed some basic pressure gear with elemental mana crystals I was able to sink to the bottom and explore. We use similar suits to mine underwater ore veins."

"I was wondering how you would deal with flooded caves. I bet there are a bunch of ores that only show up in underwater caves." Gil thought this was pretty cool since he had never thought it possible to go underwater and be able to explore.

"Of course there are. How do you think we make the weapons with high water elemental affinity. My model here even has ice jade around her neck. That is mined in very cold caves. Often underwater and frozen in ice." Grey pointed to the pendants and shared more information that Walker greedily memorized.

"Anyways, I went in to the shallows to explore and found a world I had never seen. Plants called corals and fish with spikes. I saw spiders called crabs at the bottom crawling under rocks. The legs are what I

modeled the spider leg design after. They are very useful. But what was the main inspiration to my first major creation was the hermit crab. Have you heard of them?" Grey was eager to see if they had the same mind set as him yet again. He had a good feeling after they had spoken about his spider golem before.

"I actually have. I'm not sure what they really look like but I was told by a traveler that they carry their house on their backs. The merchant shared a shell he said was its house and that they were everywhere at the beach. I wish I could go there." Walker recalled walking the market with his mother and meeting this merchant. It was a very fond memory he had since he had seen that the world was full of many things he had yet to see on that day.

"In a way they do. The shells are their defenses from things that would eat them. They crawl in to it when they are afraid and nothing can hurt them. I took that theory and created a golem similar to that for the dwarven army. It is called the hermit guardian golem." Grey smiled with great pride.

The apprentice had let go of the tools he was using and become enamored with the story., This was the first time he was hearing of the first creation his master had built. "I know of the guardian hermit but I did not realize you based it off of a real animal." The apprentice sifted through a stack of old blue prints and designs. "I have the design here. I always wondered how it came to be."

"You're my apprentice for a reason I see. This is it." Grey took the design and showed it to Gil, Walker, and Midnight. The three looked through every inch in amazement.

"I created it so that all the parts fit within the hard metal shell. The legs all come to sharp points so they can attack. They detach easily so that the main body can hide within the shell even if it gets stuck. Then there are the orbs on the eyes used to evaluate and send images to other orbs. It has explored some very dangerous ruins and crypts we have dug in it. Not to mention braved the mountains at one point." The uses Grey gave them all sounded very valuable to the people.

"Wo when you say it joined the army it doesn't mean for wat. It means for the good of the dwarven people. Is it water proof as well?" Walker was more curious by the second.

"Yes, well, the smaller guardian hermits are. They are for the exploration of underwater tunnels. We need to make sure they are not attached to rivers where some older monsters may live. The larger ones are for surface use only."

"Underwater rivers? That sounds even more dangerous than still water or anything that might live in it." Gil couldn't imagine what terror he would face if he fell in an underwater river that would sweep him away to who knew where in the underground.

"Many miners have been lost in the past. That is why I went so far to look for designs. The models we had made based on river monsters and river animals just couldn't withstand the pressure from some of the strong underwater rivers in the mines. I needed something more and I went looking in the ocean. There are only strong things there. I had hoped to find the merfolk but that wasn't what I found, I still got my inspiration though."

Grey paused for a moment then came to a realization, "you should have headed out. Every second you waste here is a moment the outside world run by you. Do you think you will find a design for your next golem in here? Will you find the materials we need in here? Or will you choose to let your mind rot away like so many failed golem builders before you?" Grey did not hold back and caused the apprentice to run away toward the apprentice's living quarters.

"Now to clean up a few things so this is safe for when he returns." Grey too out a piece of white chalks and outlined the table. Next, he took some small mouse shaped golems from his pocket and places them down. "Guard this area." The small mice came to life and roamed about the work bench. "Sorry about that, some apprentices get jealous and try to play some pranks. If I like the work I will let some small security golems watch over it."

Chapter 628 - 628. Slack Jawed

Grey saw Walker's gaze fixed on the chalk and the golems. "Interested in how I made them work this way?"

"Was it too obvious?" Walker knew that it must have been written all over his face. "Believe it or not, I do try and hide my curiosity a little at times."

Gil gave Walker a quizzical look, "When have you ever hid your curiosity? You would need a master level skill to hide it and even then I am pretty sure we would all catch on." There was a short pause, "But I am also a little curious as to how the mice golems know not to fall off the table."

Gil tried to hide his words by saying them quieter but it just made it more obvious that he wanted to know. Grey could only smirk a little before he gave them an answer, "I like those with a thirst for knowledge. Usually, you would need the golem control skill if a golem isn't made with a core that bonds



to a master with mana or blood. There are also other orbs that are designed to control them. These are different though."

Grey pointed out a series of small mana gems, "Those mana gems are inscribed with runes and enchanted with a skill. The layers given to them make them act a certain way when disturbed. Specifically, they let out a high pitched squeaking that will alert a few other golems I keep on patrol nearby." This made it sound like there were more golems that Grey had made waiting in the shades. However, Walker could not doubt this thought as it entered his head.

"The crystals also allow it to roam free since it acts on its' own. The only restriction it has is when it encountered the white lines of mana chalk. Mana chalk is just chalk infused with mana. We mine a lot of it and it is ideal for measuring and marking since it washes away with water."

"Huh, I knew that most of the chalk sold to the kingdoms was from the dwarves but if you also use it I am surprised there is enough to go around." Walker was sure that the dwarves must use a substantial amount of chalk every single day. However, they still managed to sell a great deal to other kingdoms.

"Crafters always need it and there is a lot of ash from our forges. We mix that with a few other minerals that we mine and the natural chalk that would fall to brittle pieces is mixed and becomes this. It's very simple but takes time." They were amazed that this wasn't the exact chalk mined from the earth but instead, a mixture to create useable chalk.

"Hmm, maybe I should send out another apprentice to gather more materials. But do I really need them?" Grey began to ponder out loud while Walker and Gil thought on their own. "Well in any case, what else are you two after here in the high forge? Looking to have weapons or armors made? We can have that done in a short time. You don't need to beat around the bush. I can introduce you to the best smiths we have."

Walker and Gil wanted to keep exploring the golems, but they had already spent too much time with them and needed to focus on their main point. Spirit forging.

"We would like to meet the best spirit forger in the high forge. We have to learn the process and try a few things with them to see if there is a way to meld the elven ways and the dwarven ways. If possible that would solve any disputes between the two races and help the alliance grow stronger together. That is if the dwarves join after the summit." Walker said this casually. He and Gil were used to this now since they had been trying for the same things so often.

With Midnight giving Grey a side glance and turning her head a bit, she huffed to get Walker and Gil's attention. Grey had frozen slightly while looking at them. "Are...you serious? You have permission from the kings to see the methods and even influence them?" Grey's voice was close to a whisper. He couldn't believe this would ever happen.

"Trust me, it took us a lot of effort to get here. We needed to meet each of the kings and help with the slimes. Not to mention the fact that we just came from the forest elf city where we helped beat the purple slimes. They even threw us in jail for a bot thinking we were breaking their laws." Gil threw his arms up while recounting this fact. He was still a little annoyed with this but was mostly just saying it to show that they had been through a lot lately.

Grey was even more slack jawed now that Gil had spoken. The look on his face made Midnight worry even more that her party members were going to shock the dwarf in to an early grave. "Midnight, what's that look for? We are just telling the truth. It's a very important thing to do for a hero." Walker thought that Midnight was worried that Grey thought they were lying. However, it was the opposite, Grey was shocked because he believed them.

"I can't say that I will be allowed to join you as you speak to one of the oldest dwarves left alive. But I will guide you to him and the mithril forge." Walker and Gil watched as Grey turned away and walked forward. They could tell his movements were stiff and he was still grappling with their words. Walker knew that he was taking them somewhere important, but just how important was it to make Grey act this way?

Chapter 629 - 629. Grey's Master

"Hey Walker, Mithril is almost as rare and tough as Orichalcum, right.' Gil wasn't sure if he was confusing the two metals or if it was really that rare.

"You're right. It is one of the rarest metals and Grey just said there was a forge made of it. I want to see it." Midnight overheard the conversation and perked up hearing that they were going to a forge. She just wanted to find a spot to lay and nap while Gil and Walker did what they needed.

Grey was still stiff and silent as they walked down a long stone corridor. The only notable features of the entire corridor were the gold inlay on the floors in the shapes of earth elemental runes. This was easily recognized by Walker who had been sure to remember the most basic patterns for each rune.

Grey stopped when they began to bare a plain wood door that spanned the hallways' top to bottom. "Just to prepare you two, the elder does not appear the same as most elders would. He had been alive a great deal of years for a dwarf and had augmented some of his body parts to better do his job. The surgeons all thought he was crazy and still do. Please do not anger him. He had been working for a few years on his current project."

Grey said a few years but Gil and Walker could both tell that there was weight behind these words. A few years for them could be three to five. However, for a dwarf it could be fifty or sixty. If it is an elf it could be one or two hundred. Years were all relative to the race that was being discussed. This alone was a common point for confusion in every race.

Walker and Gil both nodded. The only one that didn't was Midnight but she had no idea what any of the words had meant. She only cared for snacks and a napping spot when they would enter the mithril forge. "Good, now prepare yourself." Grey knocked on the door and it slowly creaked open. "Elder, the kings have sent these three to speak with you."

There was an old but almost metallic voice that replied, "Kings? Grey? Why are you not a king et? Do you think I raised you for fun? Go steal that crown already." The voice was not connected to a body that they could see, however, the mithril forge was mostly dark and only lit by a small flame.

Walker wasn't sure if they should enter, but the voice spoke again, "You three may come in. Grey, go and practice your forging. I want twenty golems made without any molds." It was clear why Grey did not want to come to the mithril forge. He was coming in to his own masters' territory and was instantly handed a task. "Well, you two and the dragon should come in. You are letting the heat out and I need constant temperature for the wires I'm making."

Walker and Gil didn't hesitate. Midnight gladly pranced in ahead of them looking for the perfect spot to take her nap. "So you three are here for what I assume is to learn something only I know? But none of you appear to be any kind of blacksmith so how would you learn spirit forging from me?"

The elder was not foolish. He knew that the only people that would ever be sent to him were those who would one day be able to spirit forge or those that needed to know the process for some reason.

Walker looked about the room and finally narrowed his eyes on a small thin glowing orange wire. It was so dark he had not been able to locate where the elders' voice was coming from. "Ah, yes. The dark is better so I can see the wire and how I am changing it. Let me activate some lanterns to give us light. I made them especially so that they replicate sunlight. It is the best light for forging you know."

The lanterns on the ceiling and the walls began to come to life. Gil and Walker were silent as they finally laid eyes on the elder. It was clear that it was a dwarf in front of them. But instead of arms, there were two very intricate metal hands. There was a mix of silver colored metals and bronze covered metal but both mixed together with a high amount of rune carvings. The small mana crystals embedded in it smoothed out the outer appearance along with a few spaces where they could see gears.

This was what Grey had meant when he warned them about the elders' appearance. "Like my arms ey? They were tough to make but I am the first to ever make prosthetics in the kingdom. That is why I have the ability to spirit forge if I so desire. I believe one needs to be closer to themselves and understand themselves to do so." Walker was surprised by the mentality of the elder. He had expected a hard headed older dwarf, not a calm and wise sounding dwarf that could make himself literal arms.

"Yes, they are wonderful. I have never seen such a creation before. I think you could do a great deal with them for the injured. I can only imagine the people that can be helped." The elder turned his face to them finally revealing that the deep creases were smudged with coal and ash.

"I like your thinking, I would mass produce these if possible, but sadly, each needs to be made to the unique user. Too expensive for many." The elder shook his head. This was one of the more depressing aspects of his creations. "Now, tell me your reason for being here. I haven't received a quest in months and all the sudden I have some chain quest saying that I will forge the dwarves' dreams."

Chapter 630 - 630. Speak

Walker was surprised to hear that the elder had already received a chain quest. It was more than the kings had received from his knowledge. "We came to not only help with the yellow acidic slimes but also find a way to bring the elves and the dwarves together. That is the goal of the Genesis alliance. The demi-humans, humans, and elves are already preparing to build a united capital city."

Walker looked at the elder who didn't even flinch as he spoke, "There have been monsters discovered who are slowly gaining their sentient species status and we are helping them as well. One being the goblins who have once in their history almost reached this point. They are coming back from near extinction and will be a sentient race alongside the grey haired spiders that have pushed past their monster instincts."

The elder finally reacted slightly. His face was stiff but the mechanical arms twitch a little and he stopped working on the wire. Before he could even speak Walker continued since he knew that holding

back was not the best move to make. Grey had warned him not to anger the elder and if Walker held back he knew that it would anger anyone.

"The elves are very close with natural mana and that means they are very close to elemental spirits as well. Since this is the case, it is an offense to them that dwarves craft weapons out of elemental spirits which traps them in the weapons. One of which Gil wields." Walker took a deep breath and Gil showed the bow off properly. Walker could feel the fluctuation of mana as the elder used some form of appraisal skill.

"I believe that there is a way to properly work with the elemental spirits to create a sentient weapon. The elves can speak to them and dwarves can not. The dwarves have the forging skill and knowledge but elves do not. There is a partnership just waiting to be formed. However, I know that you will need proof to convince your people and the elves. So, I can speak to the spirits on your behalf and we can see what happens."

The elder released a breath through clenched teeth. "You believe the elves can actually speak to elemental spirits? And you say you can speak to them? I want proof of this first." The elder stood and walked to a large cabinet made of metal and runes against the wall. "I have a few spirits here. One of which is an awakened high earth spirit I plan to use to create a weapon out of when I am about to perish."

Walker held himself strong while the dwarf elder said this. He knew that they would burn their souls to create a masterpiece in this way before they were going to die. Yet, knowing this didn't make hearing it any easier. Walker detested the loss of life for anything. He would rather see every monster gain intelligence than need to fight them. But for some, it would always be impossible.

"This cage is rune forged and can trap spirits of any element. Let's see what it has to say." The elder uncovered a small cage that housed what looked to be a small fairy made out of clay.

"Hello, my name is Walker. I came to speak to you about a proposition." Walker was soft toned and slow with his words. He knew that the mana fluctuating from him would be hard to understand. In contrast, however, the earth elemental spirit began to move erratically in the cage. It was shocked that someone was actually speaking to it. Never in its' existence had someone spoken to it properly.

"You talk! You talk! How! Elf? No, God? No, Human! Wait! Water spirit with you!" The flurry of exclamations and mana came at Walker in mass. The earth elemental spirit had been alone whispering to the other dormant elemental spirits for a while. This was like a dream come true.

"Yes, I have a water elemental spirit with me. I was entrusted with it in the forest elf city and plan to bring it back to my kingdom and home. If it wishes to awaken other spirits there I will allow it and if it wishes to stay with me it can. But for now, it will sleep a while longer." Walker pulled the dormant water elemental spirit from his cloak. He had kept it close and safe the entire time and no one was the wiser but the party.

The earth elemental spirit calmed down and looked at Walker carefully. "Proposition? Take me away? I don't want to be trapped." The mana was somehow sad. The feeling in the entire room became heavy with slow earth elemental mana.

"What did you just do? It has never caused something like this before." The elder was showing some surprise at this. He had never seen an elemental spirit act this way in his life.

"It doesn't want to be trapped. It asked about my proposition for it and if it can leave. However, "Walker sent the mana to the earth elemental spirit while speaking to the elder, "I hope that you two can work together to craft a weapon. Spirit forging has always been forceful. My question is, what would happen if you two worked together to create something? The strength of an earth elemental spirit to call upon the earth elemental mana to assist the forger. And the spirit forger who would normally need to burn their soul to create something so magnificent?"

Walker let the two think for a moment before adding this, "Also, what would it be like if a spirit created a weapon or armor? Would they have control over it to some degree since they helped shape it? I doubt they would be forcefully attached to it like the older spirit forged weapons." Walker pushed even more leaving the earth elemental spirit and the elder staring at each other silently.