

NEW EDEN: LIVE TO PLAY, PLAY TO LIVE

Chapter 6 Dead End?

Astaroth rested for an hour, falling asleep after a while. When he woke up, he felt refreshed.

"Even sleeping feels real here." He said, amazed.

He looked to his left, and the swordsman was no longer there. Astaroth got up panicking, looking around him until he saw the man at the other end of the glade, walking back with a small animal in his hands.

He walked up to Astaroth and greeted him.

"Hello, young man. Do you feel better after resting?" The swordsman said, in a soft tone.

"Ahh yes, yes. Thank you for asking. What about you, sir?" Asked Astaroth.

"I feel fine." The swordsman answered perfunctorily.

"Are you the one who bandaged me?" He asked.

"Yes. You were bleeding a lot, and I tried my best to stop the bleeding."

Astaroth answered.

"Not the best bandaging I've seen but thank you. Now let's talk about the real problem here." The swordsman said, getting serious.

"Hmm?" Astaroth said, tilting his head slightly.

"Why?" The man simply asked.

"Uh... Why... what?" Astaroth replied, a little confused.

"Why did you come back after I told you to escape?" The swordsman said, looking slightly angered.

This threw Astaroth off. He had come back because letting this man die without helping left a foul taste in his mouth. But now, the man was angry about it? He didn't understand the reason behind it at all.

"Would you have preferred I let you die, sir?" Astaroth asked, still confused.

"Yes." The man dryly answered.

"If that meant you made it out alive and well in all certainty, then yes." He continued, sitting down on the ground.

"All I cared about was you making it out alive. " He said, looking at Astaroth with a tinge of rage.

"I don't understand, sir. I am alive and well. Where is the problem?" Astaroth asked, sitting down too.

"The problem lies in the fluke you pulled. The way you threw my sword and landed a hit good enough to wound that bear." He affirmed.

"That was sheer luck. What would have happened if you would have missed it? That bear would have hunted you down and torn you to shreds. Why didn't you leave?" The swordsman asked, looking straight into Astaroth's eyes.

"I refuse to let someone die for me." Astaroth replied firmly.

"Not as long as I haven't tried every way possible to help." He added.

The man simply looked at him for a while, then averted his gaze and started skinning the small beast he had brought. Both of them kept quiet for some time, Astaroth staring at the ground and the man skinning his animal.

"What is your name, young man?" The swordsman asked, breaking the awkward silence.

"My name is Astaroth." He proudly answered.

"Well, Astaroth, you are reckless and stupid, and I thank you for it. But never do that again. When someone offers their life so you can live another day, you do what they ask. Do you hear me?" The swordsman said, looking back at Astaroth.

"Yes, sir, I hear you loud and clear." Astaroth answered back, looking the man in the eyes.

"Good. Now, are you hungry?" The man asked, switching to a smile.

"Yes, I certainly am." Astaroth replied, also smiling.

And thus, they both chatted whilst the swordsman finished preparing the creature and preparing a fire to roast it over. After eating and resting a little, they both got up and walked toward the village.

On the way there, Astaroth finally asked the man about training him with the sword. The swordsman accepted and told him to come to see him the next day at the barracks.

He would gladly train him in swordsmanship if it kept him from simply throwing swords at creatures and hoping to kill them.

After bidding farewell to the trainer, Astaroth walked back to his alcove. He lay down on his cot and looked at the time. It was 3 Pm.

He had appeared in-game at noon. The time dilation from the game to real-time was 2:1.

He had spent a little over 3 hours in-game, so that meant only about an hour and a half had passed outside. He was ready to play for a good amount of time, since he had no work for the next few days.

He planned to play the full day of in-game time, and log out the nights to eat and wash up before going back in. So he had about two and a half days in the game.

"Time to get to work." He said, smiling widely.

He looked at his stat window, now that he had some time.

Status:

Name: Astaroth

Race: Ash Elf

Level: 3 (30/60)

Stats:

HP: 30/30

MP: 50/130

Stamina: 100

Strength: 3 Agility: 3 Constitution: 3

Intelligence: 3 Wisdom: 3

Attack Power Str: 15 Attack Power Agi: 15 Magic Attack Power: 15 Healing Power: 15

Luck: 0 (Stat unaffected by Level up and free points)

Available stat points: 2

Available skill points: 2

Physical Condition: Normal

Mental Condition: Normal

Passive abilities: Mana Lobe (Lvl1/+100 MP), Mana Control (Lvl1/2% Mana cost reduction), ???

Equipped gear:

Beginner clothes

Next, he opened up his skill list.

Skills: Ignite, Propel

Ignite: Use your mana to ignite a flammable surface for 30 seconds. Base mana cost: 10 (Scales depending on material)

Propel: Launch an item in your hand or nearby with strong wind controlled by mana. Base mana cost: 10 (Scales with the weight of the thrown object)

Astaroth noticed he was still missing a good chunk of his mana. He guessed that there was no mana regen in this game.

So he would need to find potions or consumables that filled it back up. He walked back to the old mage and see if he had any or if he knew where to get some.

As he got to the old man's abode, this time the door opened before he could knock. As he stood there unsure, from the back of the house, he heard the old raspy voice.

"Don't just stand there gawking, young one. Come in."

And so he did. He again trod lightly through the maze of books to reach the back room.

"Hello again, Master." Astaroth politely said, doing a slight bow.

"Hah!" The old man chuckled.

"I'm no one's master, young man. You best remember that. I am but an old man who knows a few parlor tricks." He added dismissively.

"I heard from mister Stryph what happened in the forest. How very reckless of you to charge a beast you have no means of fighting. Death might have been a salutary lesson for you." The old man said, sternly.

"He also told me you wanted to learn the art of the blade. I will not tell you how to live your life but know this: a jack of all trades is a master of none. Best to pick a path and stick to it." He said, looking back down at his book.

"Now tell me, to what do I owe your visit?" He said, not even looking up from his book any longer.

"I was hoping you could tell me how to regain my lost mana. Maybe a potion, or a pill of some sort?" Astaroth asked.

The old man looked up from his book with a frown.

"Young man. If it were that simple in these parts, don't you think there would be more mages?" He asked Astaroth.

"Ahh... Is it not possible, then?" Astaroth asked back.

"Sigh. It's not that it's not possible. Just that we don't have the resources to make such potions in this backwater village. You would need to make a trip to a city or large settlement for such goods." He finally added after a moment.

"Then could you point me toward a bigger settlement then?" Astaroth asked, hoping.

"Do you think you could make it there on your own?" The old man asked, his gaze sharpening.

"Would it be that difficult?" Astaroth asked, scratching his head.

"Do you think the creature you fought earlier today is a rare occurrence in these parts, young man?" The old man asked him.

"Is it not a rarer monster than normal?" Astaroth asked, slightly going pale.

"Heh. If only it were." The old man sadly answered.

"I do not know why you landed here, kid, but the monsters in these parts are all of equal or greater strength than that bear you fought. There is no way out of this village than through that monster-infested forest. The barrier around our village is the only thing keeping this place from collapsing." The mage said, his face saddening.

Astaroth gulped. Was he going to be stuck here forever? Would he have to make a new account and restart the game with a different race?

He was now seeing what the elf in the character creation meant by 'Not worth his time'. Sadly, the choice had been made. His head drooped a bit.

The old man, seeing the emotions flash on his face, sighed loudly.

"Come with me." He then said, getting up from his chair.

Astaroth watched get up, and followed behind, not expecting much anymore. He already thought he would have to restart.

The old man walked further to the back of the house, where he stopped in front of a library. Astaroth looked at him curiously.

Was he going to get a book or something? He watched the old man extend his hand to a book on the middle shelf and pull on it.

The book just tilted instead of coming out. Then the library sank into the wall to reveal a staircase going down.

The old man then started walking down the stairs. Astaroth just followed, now curious about what was down there.

Once they were down, Astaroth could feel the air getting heavier. Like something was pressing on him from all directions. The further they walked down the tunnel, the harder it was for him to breathe.

They walked for a few minutes before the tunnel transitioned into a wide cave. The cave was lit up by a brightly glowing blue orb in the center. Astaroth could feel a crushing weight on his body as he stepped closer to the orb.

"Careful not to touch it, young man. That orb is the only thing protecting our liveliness." The old man simply stated.

"This... This holds the shield up." Astaroth deduced.

"Correct." The only man nodded.

"But why did you bring me here, sir?" Astaroth asked.

"To train you." He answered.

"It's been some time since we've had someone with magic potential in these parts. I will help you get stronger as best I can. And this is the best I can do." He added, waving to the surrounding cave.

"I know you asked mister Stryph to train you to the blade. So I won't be teaching you much magic. You can learn that on your own. What I will teach you is simply mana sensing and manipulation. If used well, you can add it to your fighting style. He said, walking around the cave.

"Now sit down." He said.

"Yes, sir!" Astaroth answered, regaining hope. He might still have a chance of getting out of here!