

# Reincarnated With A Summoning System

## Chapter 101 - 101

Last night was a party for the record books. Twice they sent Cain back to Graska to get more whiskey, and the sun was well up in the sky when the party ended.

By unanimous vote, there will be no dungeon run today, but Cain and Kone plan to sneak in an hour or two this afternoon to get her to level 70. Assuming they ever get out of bed, that is. Currently, they're both in Cain's new room, as Kone insisted the Sunnybrook Guild House was too loud last night. The Druid is cuddling the Giant Lynx on the cushions while Cain, Vala and Nemu have taken the bed.

The lack of windows makes time hard to tell, but his stomach tells Cain that it's dinner time. When he gets back from his shower, he finds that the Vala twins have moved to the hot tub with a bottle of wine, and Kone is mostly awake, sprawled out on the cushions.

"Shall we go eat? My stomach says we've missed a couple of meals already." Cain says, and Kone lifts her head from the Lynx.

"Good idea, we should see if everyone else survived too. First, though, I need to be clean." Kone says, heading towards the shower.

Cain is about to grab food when it dawns on him that Vala is in the hot tub. Without armour. "When did you learn to do that? The system still shows your armour equipped." Cain asks, confused.

"Not sure. When I stuck my hand in to check the temperature, it prompted me to hide equipment for bathing. So here I am, with this lovely Elven wine and a hot bath." Vala shrugs.

One less reason to ever need to dismiss her, Cain decides. Not that she sweats anyhow, as far as he can tell, but cleaning her armour while wearing it has to be annoying.

A brunch buffet is being set up in the tavern, with enchanted serving dishes keeping everything at the right temperature. Cain tops off the mana pool for the device and loads up a plate before calling up the stairs to come to the tavern for food.

The Graska residents have all gotten seated around the big central table, and most of the Sunnybrook residents have arrived when the door opens, revealing four unexpected faces. The Dwarven Kings advisor, with a young female Dwarf in royal household

uniform holding an armful of notes, and the Mayor of Sunnybrook with his personal assistant.

The Tavern technically isn't open until tomorrow, but Cain is almost certain they're here on official business and not to drink.

Mythryll and Dimnys walk in behind them, with more assistants and clerks from the two cities following and Tanya darts back down to the kitchen, calling for Triss to start more potatoes.

"Welcome to the Darklight Tavern and Guild House. I suspect there's an arrangement already made, but please, help yourself to food and drink." Cain welcomes their visitors, standing up to shake hands with the dignitaries.

"The Mayor came by this morning, wanting us to take on a quest to find allies to keep the Ogres in check, and the King here was agreeable, also concerned about the Ogres coming down. There will be more meetings between other groups today in a bunch of cities, but this was the easiest place to hold the one between Graska and Sunnybrook." Mythryll explains.

"Misha and Cixelcid have gone off to Peaceful River through the Demon Dungeon along with the captain of the guard and a level 80 elite escort team," Lickity adds, pouring honey on spiced potatoes, which is making everyone give her strange looks.

"The Fae Alliance is meeting with the Council from Sunnybrook at the base of the mountain as we speak. They weren't happy about not getting to lead the effort and take every city involved into the alliance under their control, though, so we'll see where that goes." The Mayor of Sunnybrook laughs.

It's the same thing every time, they want to control everything. Maybe the Guild should have sent a mediator to help things get done. Or maybe not. Successful negotiations means having to deal with them more often.

"The Sunnybrook Council also had a valuable bit of information for us. If you have a level 80 group leader, or a Demon leading the Raid party, you have the option to Raid the Demon Dungeon. It becomes much tougher, with a whole new layout." Mythryll grins at Cain.

Candia and Cixelcid don't count as demons, being Vampires, but Lickity is a Succubus. If they can gather the whole guild into a higher level raid, they should be able to gain a bunch of levels in a hurry, which will be a great benefit, as the main Ogre Kings in the Northern Territory have Level 85 and 90 elite troops.

The meeting between officials lasts all day and will continue tomorrow. The Sunnybrook groups have brought crystal balls for communication, so tomorrow, they will try to reconcile all the agreements between various cities to ensure no conflicts.

Cain has arranged for the visitors to be put up in the Guild House tonight, and a few extra hands have been hired from the Orphanage so they can enjoy an evening feast without anyone needing to go home afterwards. But if this is going to become a regular thing, they're going to need either an expansion of the building or a visitors lodge built nearby. Possibly both. There's a vacant property next to the backyard with no street access, so they might be able to create a fortified lodge there for extra visitors.

The Guild has also reached rank two after the awards for killing the Ogre King, which expands their member cap from 20 to 50 members. They're not in a hurry to grow, but if they take in more members, Cain would rather not have both houses packed to the point they can't house visitors.

He runs the idea by Gramps, who shows him on the deed that the vacant property is already part of theirs, just fenced off because the last owner didn't want to develop it. He insists Dwarves can build a perfectly suitable building on the odd-shaped lot, so Cain orders him to make something well secured, with mostly bunk beds in barracks and a half dozen three room suites for dignitaries.

The usual delegation is only a few nobles with their assistants and a dozen guards, it seems, so they can arrange for twice that without issue.. The building will also conveniently give them more storage space that they're greatly lacking, with the basements connected through a tunnel for ease of movement and storage rooms dug in the solid stone under the back lawn, except for one corner, where Kone, Ohla and Char have convinced everyone of the need to build a natural pool hidden by tall shrubbery for relaxation.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 102 - 102**

The second day goes much more smoothly, as almost all the agreements were finalized the first day. Only the Fae Alliance and one group of Forest Elves in the East couldn't come to an agreement.

Sunnybrook deemed this acceptable, and intends to move forward with what they can get, unifying the agreements into a war alliance against the Ogres. They even managed to get a number of Frontline cities on board, using a high level Mage in Sunnybrook to open portals between the cities to move troops and supplies as part of the deal.

Beginner Valley is starting to look a lot more cohesive already. Only Graska won't have a full time portal, as the Fae Alliance threatened to invade the city if they established one, but unofficially, the Darklight Host will be moving huge amounts of materials and equipment between the two cities through their Guild House and bank. Their agreement with Sunnybrook ended up being one of supply, not of military force.

The hapless Fae Alliance will end up being the defensive force for the efforts biggest production facility simply because they have it surrounded. An easy win as far as the Graska King is concerned.

Misha and Cixelcid return before supper time, and the Quest reward comes in while the Guild is eating at the Sunnybrook Guild House, the Graska Tavern still being occupied by the group working out the final details.

The decision is made to try to get everyone in the Guild close to level 80 this week, so they'll all be meeting in Graska every morning to Raid the Demon Dungeon. If the pattern holds true, this area should be higher level than the entrance at Sunnybrook, giving them an advantage on leveling speed.

The new Clerics are a bit concerned, but with no fewer than 5 healers in the group they're fairly confident that they won't die at the very least.

"Can we bring some friends? A raid party is usually maximum 25 people, right?" Ohla asks.

"If you think they can handle themselves, I don't see why not." Misha shrugs and both look to Cain for confirmation.

"It should be fine. Who do we have in mind?"

"My friend Ghaz is a strong warrior, and his sister Morgan has a thing for Nathaniel, so she'll want to come too. She's a level 61 Fire Mage." Ohla smiles.

"Mork? Please no. She scares me." Nathaniel pleads.

"They're both half Orcs, with a Green Orc father. They're both good people, and they just got back from a summer in the far south visiting family. They're in a Guild though, I hope that's not a problem." Ohla explains.

"I don't see why it would be. Send them a message to meet you at the Guild House on time to get here for breakfast. Anyone else?" Cain looks around for suggestions.

"How about Shovel Face and the boys? You know, the Earth Mages from Bertha's place. They could use some materials, and they're all close to level 80." Ragnar suggests.

Cain knows who he means, six older Dwarven miners, all tough as nails, plus they'll have Rock Golem summons they usually use for digging.

"They're fun. Plus they can likely take the average Demon in a fist fight despite being Mages." Dimnys agrees.

"That works, you two can ask them to come along. The more strong fighters we have ready for the Ogres the better." Tomorrow is looking like a lot of fun. With so many people and a higher level dungeon they'll be rolling in the experience.

"Could you take weaker members too? The Orphanage has a couple of young Mages who could really use the help getting their level up before its time for them to get jobs." Triss asks.

"How weak?" Misha asks skeptically.

"Level 25. They're still pretty young." Misha looks to Cain to turn her down softly.

"Not this run, but I'll take them to the Beastkin dungeon later to help them out." He says and the Dwarf gives him a big hug in thanks. Speaking of which, she's got a system herself, a level 14 warrior, so she's never really fought. You can get that much experience doing job quests by her age. Maybe she'll want to tag along one day.

The next day starts with free entertainment. Morgan has found Nathaniel in the tavern and grabbed him into a hug, burying his face in her prodigious chest.

"Nate! I'm back, did you miss me? Don't worry I'll keep you safe in the dungeon." The girl gushes, shaking him back and forth.

If the others didn't know she was a fire Mage they'd never have guessed. The tall and heavily muscled half orc has chosen black short shorts with a crop top as her armor of choice and her pale green skin is littered with savage looking tattoos. Her long black Mohawk is deadlocked and the sides of her head tattooed in a tribal pattern.

In contrast, her brother is clean shaven, crew cut and wearing a neatly pressed tabard over his polished plate armor. He's even bigger than she is, standing about 220cm tall, where she's only a bit smaller than Cain's 195cm. Ghaz is big enough he could be a full blooded Orc, if not for his slightly more human appearance.

"Mork, put him down before he suffocates. Haven't I told you to be gentle with Elves?" he asks and Morgan flips him off.

"I just missed him, and don't call me Mork." She retorts, but does set the Elf down.

That's when the Earth Mages come in and look around at the assembled group, before laughing and heading to the breakfast buffet.

"Now this is a Guild. Bit of everything you might need, plus they've got food and whiskey." Shovel Face cheers them, and Cain makes a round of introductions.

When they get to the gate guarding the dungeons the captain of the Sunnybrook Guard and a few of his elite warriors are gathered, looking startled to see this ragtag army headed their way.

"Darklight Host and friends? We were going to head back this morning, we just had to drop off some documents for the Dwarven King. From the look of it they told you the trick to the Demon Raid. Care for company?" he asks.

Well, that would make an even 25 party members, so why not. Lickity adds them to the party and she chuckles at how Morgan hovers over Nathaniel when the lone female Paladin in their group looks his way.

"Don't we have too many?" The Paladin asks, doing a head count.

"Don't worry, a few of our members are summons. The dungeon only counts them if you ask it to.." Cain explains, leading the group towards the portal with a smile.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 103 - 103**

Cain calls all the rest of the summons the moment he enters the dungeon and the party forms ranks behind him.

"Impressive Summoned Army." Ghaz nods, petting the head of a Lamia.

"For the new arrivals, we're going to be here all day. We've got an experience buff in effect and want to get close to level 80 before it wears off." Cain explains and they nod. Limited time group experience buffs come up as system quest rewards now and then.

5 levels seems insane, but the Dwarven Earth Mages have called nearly 2 dozen small Earth Golems to bolster their numbers, so it might be possible. If not in one day, over the next few days.

This won't be an easy day though. The demons are all level 90 and epic quality. Cain records the forms for the first batch, all new to him, and sends forth the Wrath Bringers to get things started.

Even with all the buffs they get from the party, the Wrath Bringers have a hard time going toe to toe with these demons, being staggered by their blows and sometimes even knocked back. On the other hand, The Mages are all enjoying the fight immensely, the abundance of mana Totems lets them spam their best damage abilities over and over without running out of mana or using potions.

The fight is like pulling five boss monsters at once, it takes them nearly ten minutes to eliminate the single group, but they've almost done it when a patrol catches sight of them.

"Finish the first group. I'll send tanks to hold the others for now." Cain calls, diverting four of the eight Wrath Bringers to deal with the four Succubus patrol.

Their whips are beyond troublesome, sneaking past the tanks every few strikes to snap at party members. Even the webs of the Bodyguard spiders barely slow them before being torn apart. They're not as poison resistant as the first group though, and the damage is building up, bringing them down in short order.

"The experience here is amazing. How big did you say that experience bonus was?" Ghaz asks between swings of his two handed axe.

"Not sure. Bonus just said greatly increases party experience gained." Cain calls back, putting more Arrows into a dying Demon. That's the description he saw on a quest reward offered by the Hall, so it should be a believable cover story.

"Will, I'm glad you let us come along. I've already leveled up once. Didn't think I'd get there for a few weeks yet." Morgan laughs.

"You hear that Nathaniel? You woman is getting strong to take care of her Healer." Cixelcid teases, causing Nathaniel to release a long suffering sigh.

There's no time to retort though, they've attracted another group and the Clerics have their hands full with an area damage fire spell.

Every Demon they meet here is entirely new to Cain's record, adding to the total count for Vala's next upgrade, but many aren't Golem Forms he can use. Instead they're listed as [Commander] or [Epic] type Golem summons. A few of the very strongest even came up as [Demon Noble] types and Cain has no idea what ability will be able to use them.

At level 80 he's supposed to get an upgrade to his Supporters, so maybe level 90 or 100 he will get access to new classes of Golems?

As the day wears on and the day inside the dungeon starts to fade to night, Cain has managed to find 223 out of the 250 Demon types needed to upgrade Vala. But it's time to go, they've had two meals in the dungeon already and everyone is exhausted. Just a few packs and they'll be back at the exit.



But the Demon Raid isn't going to let them leave so easily. From the shadows near the gate an Incubus Night Stalker watches their approach, noting how the archer in an Incubus leather jacket gives the orders. If he can take that one out with a single strike it should break the group.

The massive raiding party has started fighting the final group of Elite Gatekeepers, a form of Balrog with strong defensive magical skills. As he watches and waits a flame circle hits the group, surely doing heavy damage. That's his cue. The Night Stalker isn't a durable Demon, he's likely to only get one chance at this before they kill him, but he's going to make his sacrifice worth it.

[Critical Strike]

[Back Attack Bonus]

[Ignore Armor]

716 Damage Dealt.

The strike brings Cain to his knees and he fires a multi shot of lightning Arrows in desperation. As the Arrows hit his attacker, webs fired by the Dread Spiders cocoon the Demon and Cain records the new form out of habit.

[Warning 23hp remaining] flashes across his screen before the healing ticks and then the spells start flooding in.

"Something almost brought Cain down in one strike? How is that even possible?" Kone gasps.

"Well, he is a ranged class." Morgan shrugs, used to surprise attacks dealing heavy damage.

"No, you don't understand, he's got like 800 hit points." Kone says and everyone except the summons stops what they're doing to look at her.

"He's got what now?" Shovel Face asks.

"She's right, that hit did over 700 damage. I don't know what sort of Demon that was, but I hope we never see one again." Cain says, getting to his feet.

He checks his logs to see what it was

[Legendary Supporter Recorded: Incubus Night Stalker]



"My identification skill says it was a Legendary quality Demon. I've never seen one, but I don't think they're going to be a regular thing. We will have to do a better job of our lookout though, I would hate to lose anyone.

With that they hurry out into Graska, not relaxing until Cain exits, making that everyone out safely.

The spiders are all over him, as if apologizing profusely and he pats their heads in consolation. "Not your fault, you can't intercept every attack."

It doesn't seem to reassure them, but Cain dismisses them anyhow, the Graska city guards likely wouldn't appreciate poisonous spider Kin in the city scaring the locals.. Even if they are friendly summons.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 104 - 104**

Once everyone is past the shock of the near assassination, the excitement of the day begins to settle in. Even the strongest of them got multiple levels today. The per kill experience was equivalent to a regular boss fight, and they came in groups. While the dungeon was incredibly dangerous and difficult, the reward was worth the effort.

With an easier day tomorrow Cain should reach level 80, and a day after that at the latest almost all of the others should have too.

The push today was good for everyone, but they are utterly exhausted. Everyone grabs a room at one of the two Guild houses, as they're the closest sleeping spot to the dungeon and falls asleep right after dinner.

Morning brings muted excitement, the prospect of level 80 and the benefits that come with it have everyone excited, but it's still quite early. All the city leaders are expecting an attack any day now, and nobody wants to be caught out trying to level up when they're needed to defend their hometown.

Morgan has taken the opportunity of Nathaniel being half awake to style his hair and prepare his breakfast, under the pretense of keeping him from being late for the raid. Ghaz fully supports his sister's conquest, and thinks it's hilarious, or maybe he's laughing at the fact she managed to give Nathaniel a Mohawk without him noticing. It's slowly settling out into a spiky updo though, so she didn't set it well enough.

Once everyone is fed and accounted for Lickity forms the raid group for the day and they head out, drawing cheers from the kids at the Orphanage next door.

Upon arriving in the Raid dungeon they find that it is very different than the predictable regular dungeon layout. In fact, this isn't even the same basic ruined world setting as yesterday, it's a plague Demon Realm. But there's demons, and they look angry, so it's time to fight.

With the first few groups easily eliminated Cain comes to a set of realizations. First, this realm is a quantity over quality sort of place. Instead of Epic Quality demons in small groups, it's mostly pestilent Hordes. Secondly, this is both an opportunity and a conundrum.

If Cain's theory that the target for his companions advancement matters, advancing Vala here might have unwanted side effects unless they can find the right target. On the other hand, getting the rest of the demons needed has been simple. Only two more are needed, so he needs an appropriate target for the Quest, and he needs to tell his party what's going on.

There a few groups ahead of them is one that looks promising. A Plague Paladin. It looks relatively normal, no boils, dangling innards or anything which is a good start. There's a squire with it that's also a new type of Demon to Cain, which will complete the quest.

"Everyone, gather up a second. I've got an ongoing quest, so when we attack that Paladin up ahead it will upgrade into a boss type monster. When we kill it, the quest will upgrade Vala, so it's fairly important to me that we don't skip this. Any objections?"

"Go for it. Vala is a beast, if she can become an Epic Companion who knows how cool she will be." Kone cheers.

Nobody speaks against the plan, so they clear the first group, careful not to get their acidic bodily fluids on anyone not a Summon. Next they attack the second group and Cain records first the Squire and then the Paladin after waiting for the other targets to be killed.

The horrific truth of the Plague Paladin becomes apparent after the first attack it makes. The pestilence debuff it applies spreads to all enemies within 3 meters of anyone with the debuff. The debuff is so virulent it even spreads between pulses of the Cleansing Totem Char has put out, requiring Kone and her clones to cast additional cleanses to stop the spread.

"Melee pull back. Summons only within 5 meters of the boss." Cain calls to the group. The summons in close to the boss are dying on a regular basis, but now the party members are safe. Cain also pulls back the original Vala so she's alive when the quest

completes. Nemu seemed to have some input into her transformation, so that must matter.

Hopefully the girls can't turn Vala into something strange with their love of all things Fluffy.

[Quest Complete: Configuring Epic Companion]

[Title Earned: Loyal Companion] achieve perfect uptime for a companion between Greater and Epic upgrades to earn an additional skill.

[Companion Item Gained: Plague Eater] Two Handed Sword. Plague damage done by party members heals the bearer. Damage increases with level.

[Shared Skill Learned: Pestilence] Passive. Rapid spreading debuff. Deals Plague Damage to infected targets.

Epic doesn't even begin to cover what they just gained. Even as prepared as their group is, they had a hard time dealing with [Pestilence]. That skill will absolutely decimate crowded enemy armies.

Vala still looks pretty much the same. She's a bit taller, the black metal armor on her wings now has Spiked chains hanging from it, and there's a belt made of similarly vicious looking chain. Her Horns now have Gold streaks and her black armor has Gold trim on the solid plates. Everything about her gives the impression of power and a sense of nobility.

"If she fights as good as she looks the rest of us probably don't need to be here." Shovel Face the Dwarven Earth Mage jokes. But he's a bit right. With the additional damage and toughness from Cain's gear plus her self healing and pestilence, she could probably solo most dungeons.

"What else did you gain besides the fancy sword and the pestilence skill?" Cain asks Vala once she finishes doing a spin for everyone to inspect her new appearance.

"Just a bit of debuff resistance. Everything else stayed the same except my damage and Stat modifiers. Epic Companions truly are Epic. The two of us could almost be a dungeon boss ourselves." the Demon jokes.

But, looking at her stats in his screen, she's right. She's tougher than the Epic level monsters they faced yesterday, so she could be a boss of sorts.

"Alright, Quest completed.. Let's try these skills out and get us some experience."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 105 - 105

The new Pestilence skill has both advantages and disadvantages. It spreads to an entire group almost instantly, and few can resist it, but unlike poison it doesn't stack.

Secondarily, it's a passive, so if you're looking to assassinate a target without alerting those around them, it's not happening. Unless those people are not allies with them or enemies to you.

In their current situation Pestilence is amazing, and Cain can't wait to try it out inside the Beastkin dungeon where everything crowds around them by the entry.

Unlike the early day they had planned, the raid ends up grinding late into the afternoon, as a few members were very close to hitting level 80. After that the experience per level is insane, level 75 to 80 takes the same as 80 to 81. No wonder everyone gets stuck at or near level 80 in the valley. Even in the Demon Raid, the toughest fights they've seen so far, and with Cain's experience bonus it's still going to take multiple days per level.

Though they did get their highest level companions from late level 80 almost to 82 in only two days, which shocked and impressed them all.

Cain smiles as he looks through the party status and sees a wall of level 80 tags. Mission accomplished, they got everyone to the essential break point for the battle against the Ogres, and most of them have gotten some amazing new skills.

Misha decided her healing was sufficient for now, so she went with a mana coat reduction talent that should let her heal indefinitely even without a totem, in her current gear. Mythryll got a sweet new [Forest Guardian] Treant that grants her a nature armor buff when active and makes an excellent Tank for when Cain isn't around. Char got doubled effectiveness on her Totems, plus a Rank A [Tornado] book drop. and Candia, the lucky one of the day got a Rank S Slashing Wave Spell that can create a tsunami almost 30 meters wide. Plus she got new class abilities at 60, 70 and level 80 over the last couple days that have greatly increased her mobility and single target damage.

Cain dismisses his Supporters and calls them back, checking the changes now that they're [Advanced Supporters]. They can now use all of a cloned target's skills, with a reduced effect, but the non class skills are modified by Cain's own stats, which makes them fairly effective still. Plus the Supporters get full effect from the cloned target's equipment.

The only sad part is that he can't clone himself. He's an invalid target but it was worth a shot.

Level 90 he is supposed to get another Supporter, which is always nice, and now that he's level 80, he can see that his progression tree will come up with a skill option at level 100. The very first time he will get to choose between skills, and he can't wait to see what they'll be, even if level 100 is still a long ways away.

But even more importantly, he now has 25 Stat points to spend. Which means one thing. 100 INT

[Name] Cain

[Level] 80

[Class] Puppet Master

[Race] Human

[Stats] 25->0

[STR] 125

[DEX] 100

[CON] 100

[INT] 75 ->100

[HP] 800

[MP] 375-> 1000

[Notice: Beginning From INT 100 Summons Gain Spell Power and MP From INT]

[New Skill Available: Summon Lesser Sorcerer] Mage Type <Golems> only.

That's exactly what Cain was hoping for, the MP modifier doubled at 100 like HP did. That should be his final basic form of Golems before the choice at level 100, he will just need to raise his stats to get the greater versions. How high isn't specified, but Cain is reasonably sure it will work.

They're only a few minutes from the exit, taking a break to get organized before the final push to the exit, so Cain takes the time to decide what he needs for a Mage type Golem. Naga Wave Casters? Ogre Mages? Maybe Lich Lords? They're great Mages, plus they can curse to weaken enemies and call forth Skeletons.

Yes, tiny stabby skeletons are the answer to everything. He will get four Lich Lords, so that should be a reasonable number of additional skeletons.

"I got a new Summon ability, Mage type Golems, so don't panic when the Lich Lords appear." Cain calls to the party, having learned it's best not to freak everyone out with suddenly appearing monsters.

As soon as they appear the commands them to Summon their defensive Skeletons and gets a menu notification.

[Lesser Skeletons Available: Warrior, Mage, Archer]

That's even better. Make it two of warriors, one of Mages and one of archers.

These skeletons are definitely cute. They're about 100cm tall with sword and buckler shield warriors, wands for the Mages and low quality wooden bows for the archers.

The group laughs at his tiny Undead army, but Cain is impressed. Each Lich called 5 tiny Skeletons, so he's got another 20 Undead on top of his 4 new Mages.

They're not exactly effective, but they're adorable enough it doesn't matter. Every time they get hit they collapse into a pile of bones and reform to keep fighting. They can be almost as effective as the Spider webs for crowd control though, as enemies tend to trip on the loose bones, leaving them vulnerable.

The Mages are a waste, they run out of mana right away and just start stabbing with their wands, so Cain won't use them again. The archers seem to have unlimited ammunition hidden in their ribcage, so they're a keeper.

Maybe not quite unlimited, Cain now notices they go picking the Arrows up between fights and sticking them back into the shadows of their chest.

The rest of the run goes smoothly, with the party members cheering on the tiny Skeletons as they attack the legs of enraged plague demons. Honestly, they're in the way, but it's entertaining. If there isn't an urgent reason why he might need the skeletons, Cain decides this skill will more often be used to Summon Blight Demon Mages. They also cause a cripple debuff, plus they've got both area and single target attack magic where the Lich is more focused on exotic debuffs and single target damage.

One celebration isn't enough for today's advancements. Too many have hit level 80 to celebrate in one location. The Darklight Host will be holding one in their tavern along with the Dwarves, while Ghaz, Morgan and the Elves from Sunnybrook will be holding theirs at the usual tavern there.

The Guild has promised to drop in to celebrate, so they'll go early and start the party in Graska later.. The Dwarves are much more amenable to drinking until morning anyhow.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 106 - 106

Kone had the right idea all along, Cain decides the next afternoon when he wakes up with Nemu draped across him. It's all about the fluff.

Shifting around to see the state of the party's aftermath he finds no fewer than fifteen people passed out in his room, both Nemus plus Misha and Mythryll in his bed, then the Vala twins and Dimnys drinking in the tub along with Morgan and a very threatened looking Nathaniel.

"Didn't your brother tell you to be gentle with Elves?" Cain jokes, trying not to wake the others as he gets out of bed, opting to simply transfer Nemu over on top of Misha.

"I am gentle, see. No marks or bruises at all." Morgan announces, proud of herself.

"I'm going to find some breakfast, if anyone's interested. I'm sure the others will be awake soon." Cain laughs, headed for the door, chased by a dripping wet Elven cleric in his underwear.

"I'll join you. Enjoy the tub ladies." Nathaniel calls as he runs away to the sounds of quiet laughter.

"It's not that I don't like her you see, it's just that she is terrifying. You understand, right?" He explains, equipping a robe as he catches up to Cain.

"Certainly. She's persistent though, so I'm sure you'll have time to get used to her, as long as you don't do anything too horrible to make her leave." Cain pats the Guild member on the shoulder.

"We'll be living at our Guild House in Sunnybrook for most of a year this time, I've got high hopes for the pair of you." a somewhat haggard Ghaz jokes, emerging from a room that seems to still have a number of female Dwarves sleeping in it. That party really did get out of hand.



Brunch is ready by the time they get down to the kitchen, loading plates and returning to the tavern, stepping over slowly awakening party goers to reach a booth. Triss and a few other girls from the Orphanage bring up the buffet setup to get everyone fed and mobile for the day, the girls hired as maids having all started their day cleaning the Sunnybrook house as every room of the Graska house, including the floor in the forge, is occupied.

"You'll have a time of it today, getting everyone fed so they can get moving. Get Gramps to pay any extra hands you need from the Guild funds. I'm not sure where he went though." Cain smiles at everyone bringing the food upstairs.

"He's one of the Dwarves asleep on the floor by the forge. Says the heat helps the old joints." Triss laughs.

Kone comes down from her room with a dozen or so young girls from next door as soon as the smell of food begins to spread. Looks like they decided on a sleepover, since everyone else was having an all night party anyhow. Triss brings out a jug of spiced milk to go with the usual juice, coffee and mead in the breakfast selections and the kids cheer. Spiced milk isn't particularly expensive, but it's more expensive than having the orphans drink tea with breakfast, so it's a luxury.

Cain decides to keep his word right away, so he calls Triss over as the evening's guests begin to file out for the day.

"I'm going to head into the Beastkin dungeon today for just a little while. Would you like to grab the couple of Mages you mentioned being in need of some additional levels and join me?" he asks.

"Me, join you? I'm not much of a fighter. I just happened to awaken my interface while very young and didn't know about the random class generator." She laughs.

"No need to find them either, they're already here." Kone indicates a pair of young Dwarves barely into their teens, drinking spiced milk and eating chocolate chip pancakes.

"Well, if our resident Druid is up for it, that makes five if you come along. I'll excuse you from work for the day and I'm sure the others won't mind an extra paid hour or two to cover your chores will they?" The others definitely won't mind the work. There's lots of them here, and the Guild pays well thanks to Gramps soft spot for the orphan kids. He even sends them on make work projects to drag out a little extra time if they haven't found much other work lately. Nobody in the Guild has done their own shopping since the first day thanks to that system.

"Isn't the dungeon a bit high level though? We're only level 25." One of the Mages asks.

"Don't worry, our technique brings the monsters to us, so you'll just have to sit by the gate while the fighting goes on around you." Cain smiles and Kone chuckles, remembering what happens when very low levels go into a very high level dungeon for a carry. Plus, this one is fifteen level higher than the one in Sunnybrook, and the others, but especially Triss, are even lower level than Kone herself was when the Darklight Host started power leveling her.

"If you're sure it's safe, I'm all for it. A few levels would really help with the strength Stat to make my work easier." Triss finally agrees.

Cain gathers up Vala and Nemu, informing the Guild members that are currently in the tavern that they're off to go help some orphans level, causing those in the know to burst into laughter and wave him on his way.

The usual guard is at the gate this morning, giving them an odd look about bringing more children into the Dungeon. Sure, Kone is tough, but the Dwarf knows these kids are just average kids, even if Triss is mostly grown.

"You sure about that then?" he asks as they walk up.

"We're good! We've got a plan to protect them in the middle while we fight." the Spirit Folk Druid assures him while Cain calls out the Greater Golems as well as the Blight Demon Mages. The little skeletons were fun, and a load of extra experience, but today calls for much more area damage that the Lich Lords and skeletons just can't achieve. The Blight Demon Mages have an area attack that spreads [Weakness] and will greatly increase the enemies damage taken.

They set up in their usual cluster by the gate, the Young Dwarves having collapsed from the flood of notifications the second they entered, due to the opponents that always crowd the door.

"Don't worry, eventually the notifications slow down until you can function again. I know, it happened to me once too." Kone laughs in shared misery before returning to the fight.

The combination of Pestilence and Vala's group heal on hit had made her job here very, very easy. Mostly she's just cheering on her Bears, and the ones called by the clones of her that Cain summoned. The clones do significantly more damage now than she remembers them doing, a result of Cain's upgrade in INT, as their damage is based off the Casters spell power. All of the summons seem to have gotten a huge boost in the last few days, they're cutting through the Beastkin almost as fast as they appear, no huge crowds this time.

But just how long are these Dwarves going to be out?

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 107 - 107

The answer to how long they'll be out is 45 minutes. That's how long it takes them to get the notifications under control and get past the dizziness. If they're functional, that means they've gotten enough levels to safely be here, even if they're not equipped for it, or capable of clearing it on their own.

"Do you want to do your skills in here and test them now, or take some time to think about them and test them another day?" Cain asks.

"If we can come back that would be great. I've got so many skill points that I could go down two different paths at once, and I don't want to mess my development up with poor choices because I'm in a hurry." One of the Mages says wisely and the other one nods in agreement.

"You'll have to check your inventory afterwards too. It's set to standard loot so the dungeon itself assigns the drops however it feels like. You might have gotten a skill book or a really good piece of armor that will influence your choices." Cain adds and they all look excited as they back out the gate, Cain taking up the final position and dismissing the extra summons as he steps out.

The gate guard has cautioned them not to mention any drops in public, giving essential advice that Cain himself should have done, so they had back to the Guild House to sort their loot.

"That was quick. Got the kids a few levels for the day and came back for a snack?" Ghaz asks when he sees them returning.

"Power Leveling is evil. Pure evil in a way the demons themselves couldn't imagine." Triss responds with a frown and Kone laughs.

"But you're strong now. How did you do on levels anyhow?"

"I got up to level 51 and the Mages are level 54 now. I can't imagine what would happen if we stayed in there all day." Triss laughs, eyes vacant as she looks at her inventory.

"You recovered faster than I would have expected. I thought you'd be out until nearly level 60." Cain grins and the Mages shake their head.

"I would say you should have warned us, but no warning would be sufficient to explain what just happened in that dungeon without seeing it for yourself." The smaller of the Mages adds.

"Get anything good? Everyone here can be trusted."

"I got a Rank C [Greater Rock Shaping] spell. It's amazing for sculptors and architects." One Mage confirms.

"I got a Rank A [Stone Rain] spell that looks pretty good. I don't know if it's any use outside combat, but at least it doesn't clash with the Earth Mages path if I can get an apprenticeship to become a miner or a Smith." The other grins.

"No skill books for me, but I got a sweet piece of armor that reduces stamina usage to half. That could be useful at work." Triss says and Cain can see she's about to equip it.

"Wait, wait. First try, change in a private room. We learned all about wardrobe malfunctions from the Demon Dungeon." Cain reminds her before she can do something dangerous.

She comes out of the back room a few seconds later in a very low cut dress that ends below her knees. The only sign of armor on it is a plate belt, but the way that it sits Cain suspects there's armor underneath.

"It's a chain mail piece, but it fits very well." She nods looking down at herself. It's a fairly bright sky blue with black fur trim around her cleavage. much more normal than Cain had expected from the Beastkin dungeon.

"Looks great on you." Cain smiles, making her blush at the compliment, while everyone else present nods their agreement.

This is the point when Ghaz realizes Triss has no idea what she's doing, and probably hasn't yet allocated her new wealth of skill points. There are a few mistakes he wishes he hadn't made while leveling, as options don't always become visible until you've filled the prerequisites, so he takes her aside to help her plan her path.

As durable as she is now, there's no reason she couldn't do dungeons in Sunnybrook with the Guild if she wanted, or even tag along on Beastkin dungeon runs. Though the way Cain does them, about anyone could join that particular run.

He drops in to see that Ghaz has drawn out a chart of the available skill options he has learned, and that he has learned about from others. Triss never learned the non class skills taught in school, but with as much money as the Guild is making it would be no problem to buy them for her if she wanted to regularly enter the dungeons.

The Class skill list looks fairly comprehensive though, the skills warriors learn in school are mostly variations of things they will learn at a higher level later, and Triss has gained so many levels at once that she can pick a lot.

Tanking definitely isn't her thing, so Ghaz is pointing out the skills that would be most useful to the damage type warriors. They've come up with a pretty good path, and without the wasted skills that are only useful at the start and don't lead to things they will need later, she's got a fair number of points left over once their path is complete.

They are trying to decide between a few durability skills and a very mediocre stamina skill, when Cain points out a path nobody in Ghaz's notes had explored. The brawling path. It starts at level 40 with a damage buff that makes fists gain a big increase in damage, and gives a small strength buff, but that's all that's noted.

"Bartenders throw a lot of drunks out to settle their differences in the street. That might be a useful path for Triss. Plus, every skill costs one point per rank, so getting extra higher level skills is probably a better deal than a bunch of lower level ones while you've got points saved." Cain suggests.

He's got a point, they just don't know what will come once they start into the skill tree. Which makes it a bit of a risk, but one Triss is willing to take, even if it's just for the extra thumping abilities when it's time to knock heads together.

She spends her points for the optimal damage type warrior path and then puts a single point into Brawling to see what happens. There are three levels to the skill, and once they're done the warrior will get access to two more skills. First, an option to put points into grappling, to pin opponents more effectively than the lower level grab skills. Second is the Endurance skill, which gives a lot of base strength and greatly reduces stamina usage. Another very useful one for a barmaid or housekeeper.

She puts a point into Brawling and then the necessary single point into Endurance. That unlocks the steel skin ability, a single Rank Armor upgrade. Instead, she opts to put a point into grappling next, which lets her see a Dwarf exclusive skill called [Might of Mountains]. Every Rank into it increases strength and damage with fists or Gauntlet type weapons until only the very best of swords could keep up with her bare hands.

There's a lower level version of this skill for Swords and Axes that she also took. It's not Dwarf exclusive, but they get a bonus to the modifier with Axes. This is definitely an improvement to her damage potential.

Filling in Grappling and then Might of Mountains uses the last of her points, but she can see there is one more skill in the tree, [Pugilist]. You need to take every previous skill to get it, so only a Dwarf could unlock it, but it increases attack speed and damage even further when bare handed or using fist type weapons.

"So about me not being much of a Warrior. Suppose I could tag along for one more run?" Her question causes both men to burst into laughter. Of course any self-respecting Dwarf would prefer to have every skill in the Bar Fighting based tree if given the choice. They should have expected that.

Gramps is curious about what they're doing and puts on a smug grin when Triss explains. The Dark Dwarves consider that the hidden skill tree, as if you put a single point into defensive skills down the Tank type skill path, as almost everyone does while leveling, due to excess points and lack of options at lower levels, it become unavailable beyond the Brawling skill. But with Steel Skin being mandatory to unlock Pugilist, the bare knuckle fighter should still be survivable enough in heavy armor.

There's also a Dwarf exclusive skill set at level 80 for Hammer and Axe damage that she will still be able to take if she makes it that far, but being able to keep the tavern under control is enough for the work minded youngster, at least for now.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 108 - 108

Most of the Guild, Cain and Kone included, filters back to the Sunnybrook house for the rest of the day, not wanting to miss the news should the Ogres attack again. The city officials have promised to alert all the Guilds and issue Quests when the time comes for an offensive, but Sunnybrook's defensive situation is still in question, as they're not sure what will happen to the survivors after the Ogre King was killed.

Will his heir continue the attacks? Will they pick another city, or maybe even just go home? Nobody knows yet.

Since they've got a day off, everyone decides to go for snacks in the shopping district while they wait for news on the Ogres. Being level 80 in Sunnybrook is drawing an excessive amount of attention though. Many transfers leave the status bars visible at all times, which lets them see if a passerby is flagged as a criminal, but also gives an idea of their relative levels. Much of Sunnybrook is in the level 55 to 60 range. Seeing transfers tagged as being more than 20 levels higher than them is a shock. The Naga Raid is level 70, but that's not a fast or easy way to get to level 80.

They're all gathered chatting around a crepe stand, waiting for Triss and Gramps, who joined them late after taking care of business for the morning, to finish eating. They're headed back to Graska after this, but the crepes were too good to pass up.

"Actually, could we get thirty more assorted crepes to bring home for friends?" Cain asks the shopkeeper and winks at Gramps. The kids next door and the two staff who didn't want to come out this morning are sure to enjoy a sweet snack too, they're not something usually on the menu in Graska. That might change though, Gramps loves them, and is threatening violence if there is no whipped cream and fruit in the kitchen tomorrow morning.



The shopkeeper has just finished their order when the attack alarm begins to blare. "What in the world is that? Make it stop." Gramps called out, annoyed.

"It's the attack alarm, the city is under attack by Ogres again. The houses have enchantments to mute it. They'll have Guild and Raid quests up in just a moment though and it's customary for all Guilds not currently occupied to help out." Misha informs him.

"Well, I should get going then. Triss, you stay here with the other young folk, it sounds like they can use the help." Gramps says getting to his feet just as the sound of siege weapons hitting the walls begins. Whoever is leading this attack isn't messing around or waiting for his forces to form ranks like the previous king did.

Cain begins handing Triss gear from the Guild bank as they run for the Hall to grab the quest and join Raid party, gathering up other small Guilds as they go. The Mass of high level transfers is like a beacon, drawing out everyone they pass with a reasonable amount of fighting experience.

The situation is much different this time, they discover when the quest goes up. There's Ogres from not one but two different factions, and they're working together well. One group charged the North and West Walls, while the other is firing siege weapons at the East and South. The defense force didn't have time to form up outside, so they're fighting from the walls, which have already started to take heavy damage.

The siege weapons are out of arrow range, so they will need to be attacked before they can breach the wall, but the Ogres charging need to be stopped or they'll climb it. The suddenness of the attack is making a mess of everything, so the two raid groups are deciding what to do.

The final plan is to have group 1 push out from the corner of the south wall, preventing the attackers along the west wall from attacking group 2 as they run towards the tree line and attack the crews working the siege weapons. They'll work their way East while group 1 moves towards the north and hopefully meet at the opposite corner of the city when they've finished their task.

Once a gate is safe to open, the defense force will charge out to join them, until then they'll be fighting from behind the walls using Archers and their own siege weapons.

At first the Guilds think getting over the wall safely will be the hard part, but with Cain along, it's much easier than anticipated. A shoulder to shoulder wall of Ogres is ideal territory for the Pestilence debuff to spread, straining their healers and starting to whittle away at the Ogres health. Then he calls the majority of his summons on to the ground at the base of the wall, driving the Ogres back from the spot the Guilds have dropped the rope ladders.

It's a smooth process and in only a few minutes they've established Beachhead in the southwest corner of town. Group 1 leads, pushing the Ogres north, leaving a gap



between the siege weapons fire and the melee combatants that group 2 exploits to get to the tree line. From the sound of combat and the fires that are spreading, the siege engines weren't particularly well defended at that corner, and they're making good headway.

The cripple debuff from the Plague Demon Mages doesn't spread as virulently as the Pestilence debuff does, but the Ogres are seriously lacking in the ability to cleanse it, letting it spread all through the west and north wall attackers. The combination of the two is enough that the archers on the walls are now beginning to visibly thin the Ogre ranks, even before the transfers have begun to really work their way across.

While the battle is going far better than expected, within the Darklight Host, a cold war is brewing. In combat, Misha always stands next to Cain. Has since the party was just the two of them. But today, Nemu had decided that is her spot, stealthily sneaking between the two every time the opportunity presents itself.

Cain is too busy to have noticed but Mythryll, standing on his other side, but far enough away to allow the mental battle between Misha and the Felian to happen unhindered, is greatly enjoying the show.. Even Morgan has noticed the fight for supremacy, causing her to pull closer to Nathaniel and mouth the words "thieving cat" at Mythryll when the two lock eyes in amusement.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 109 - 109

Cain does eventually notice their antics, when Nemu gets so into it that only one of them is playing a combat buff.

"What are you doing? Stop stealing Misha's spot and get back to casting. You can take the other side if it means that much to you." He says, thumping the Felian on the head before petting her ears and returning to the fight. The happy look on Misha's face doesn't go unnoticed by the other ladies who share a meaningful glance at the two.

Mythryll knows they've casually shared a bed more than once in every sense of the phrase, but now that she has a rival, the laid back cleric seems determined to move things into a more solid direction. While Nemu is sweet and cuddly in her own way, the Mage is still cheering on Misha's chance to land herself the man she wants once and for all. Now that she's finally decided to make her move that is.

Unlike Nemu, who needs to play an instrument constantly for one of her buffs, Misha has some free time on her hands. The why of that is simple, an overlooked interaction between Vala's new Pestilence Skill and her ability to heal the group for a percentage of damage done. The widespread Pestilence is sending a significant amount of healing outwards, but the gear they picked for her adds forty points to every heal she does. So every half second when the pestilence effect sends a raid wide heal out, it gets enhanced.

The transfers are all well geared, but unlike Cain with his huge reserve of health, three hundred HP is all most of them have. A third or more of their health passively every second leaves the healers free to cast whatever damaging abilities they have and only intervene when someone takes a particularly hard hit or gets Poisoned or cursed.

There's a lull in the fighting while the Ogres regroup and the raid party moves around the corner from the west wall to the north, so Misha takes a page out of Nemu's play book and rubs up against Cain, which he responds to with an arm wrapped around her waist and a smile before kissing the top of her head.

Nemu makes a disgruntled noise at what she views as an unfair use of her techniques, attracting attention from many raid party members, most of whom don't know that Nemu is a Summon and only see two women fighting for the Puppet Master's attention. The sight brightens their mood, if the strongest among them have time to flirt and play around, certainly the city can't be in too dire of a state.

The North Wall has already been over half cleared by the combination of rapidly spreading debuffs and the archers on the walls, leaving Ogre bodies littered all over the ground. The raid group pushed hard into the survivors, targeting the leaders and healers as much as they can, knowing that without organization this offensive against the city is doomed.

The sound of siege weapons has become sporadic too, so the fight at the other sides must not be going too badly. Cain hasn't seen any Royalty or special units yet though, so unless they're all with the siege weapons, this offensive is unlikely to be the last one in the immediate future.

Disappointment awaits them when they meet up with the other raid party in the Northeast corner of the city, no senior command elements were found. Which can only mean this was a test of Sunnybrook's defenses and they're going to return. Finding the base camp of the Ogres has proven extremely elusive though, stifling all attempts to head off the attacks. Many scouts have been sent out, but most returned having found no sign, like the Ogres simply vanished. The rest simply vanished themselves.

That is the topic of conversation in the Darklight Host Guild House today.

"I say I head out with whoever wants to accompany me and search for signs of a hidden dungeon. If Elven scouts can't find them, there's a good chance they're not keeping a

massive army out in the open. The guards near the known dungeons haven't been attacked, so they're not hiding in one of them." Cain begins.

"So like the one we found in the woods on the way here? The one with the hot springs in the final boss room?" Mythryll nods her understanding. That dungeon wasn't entirely unknown, they'd heard rumors of it, but it was unguarded and hidden in the woods. In fact, it might be close enough to be included in their search.

The biggest problem will be finding signs of the Ogres. They don't have a Ranger skilled in tracking within the Guild, and anyone else might miss the signs mostly covered by magic as the Ogres retreated. This is a conundrum for Cain. Should he post a quest? Try to recruit someone into the Guild?

"We need a Ranger with good tracking abilities for this. Any suggestions?" he asks the gathered Guild Members.

"Spirit Folk Rangers get an even bigger bonus to tracking monsters than Elves do. The Elves get a bigger bonus to tracking humans and animals." Kone points out.

"I know where we can find just the right Ranger. Want me to go invite them to the Guild?" Char asks hopefully. Cain isn't sure if this Ranger will be small and cute or if it will be fluffy, but if Char thinks they're perfect they're almost guaranteed to be one of the two.

"Sure, bring them by and if nobody objects we will have a new Guild member." Misha nods, as Cain looks lost in thought. Char hurries out, as the day is beginning to get late, and the others chat about possible locations for a hidden dungeon that wouldn't have attracted attention.

In under an hour, Char has returned with her chosen Ranger. At first Cain thinks she's brought them an Elf, but the ears aren't long. No, the girl she brought appears to be a human, every bit as ragged as Kone was when they first met. Her equipment is of good quality, so she's obviously been to at least a few dungeons, but it's pretty beat up and covered in dirt and mud.

Are they perhaps running a goodwill for unfortunate young ladies? Because as far as Cain can tell, that's almost all they seem to attract to the Guild.

"This Ranger here has the best nose in the Elven woods. A transfer, not a local. Go ahead, introduce yourself." Char pushes the short human forward. Upon closer inspection, she's not a child, just very short for a human. She must have set her character parameters all to minimum except her breasts. The sort of thing Cain would expect a guy playing a female class in a game to do, but the transfer system locked them to only one sex or the other. He couldn't pick any female class options.

"Hello everyone. My name is Belle, I'm a level 55 Ranger, with Maxed tracking, and some Concealment skills. I prefer Archery, but I do have some melee combat affinity."

Elmira, their sugar loving Pixie is circling around her head, giving her an inspection. "You're not a human are you? You look like one, but you don't feel like one." She insists, poking at Belle's face as if it would change or break an illusion.

"I'm actually a werewolf. I used the random character creation and got a basic class, but a hidden race." She confirms.

That really might be perfect. Aren't Werewolves supposed to have a really great sense of smell? Cain smiles in victory.

"I think Char was right, you're just what we need. Would you like to join the Darklight Host, Belle?"

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 110 - 110**

"You'll take me? As a full member, no prospecting?" Belle asks hopefully and Char gives her a hug.

"What that other guild did isn't normal. You'll be a full member, with pay and benefits as soon as you join." The Shaman assures her.

[Exploitative contract, took 100 percent of her drops and then required additional daily payments on top. They even made her sleep in the yard, saying she would get a room when her trial was done, but their members list is full.] Char sends in Guild chat.

Cain had almost forgotten about that sort of douchebags. They've met so many good people lately, and with him spending time in Graska where they see no transfers, he started getting used to the Dwarves "Everyone is equal to the skills they have." attitude towards life.

Cain sends the Guild invitation right away, informing Belle to look it over carefully.

"Will we need to do anything to break her old contract?" he asks Char, who shakes her head.

"It had a two Gold coin penalty for breaking the contract, and I've already paid it at the hall. No worries there, we're covered." She confirms. Good, it would be greatly annoying if another Guild sent guards and lawyers to come after their item drops.

"What is this part in the section about picking a room? Is there more than one house that counts as a Guild House, or are new recruits kept somewhere else?" Belle asks suspiciously.

"We have houses here and in the city of Graska. The two are linked by a magical circle, so you can walk from one to the other. Want to see the available rooms before you decide?" Cain asks and she nods.

First up, they show her the common areas, the sitting room, the library, the games room and the big women's bath before moving on to the freshly renovated basement here, which she is surprised to see isn't the last option members would pick.

"Dwarves like being underground and near a forge. It helps them sleep." Cain explains and Dimnys points out her room across from the forge.

Then they go upstairs, showing her around the few empty rooms left on the top floor of the Sunnybrook house. She looks impressed, but not overwhelmed. But that's probably going to change when she sees the unique opulence of the Graska house's bedrooms.

"Now, back to the basement and we will go to the Graska house." Cain leads the way through the portal, startling Gramps and Ragnar who are smelting ore into ingots at the Graska forge.

"Just showing a new member around to pick out a bedroom. Belle, this is Gramps, in charge of the Graska house and Tavern, and Ragnar, one of our in house blacksmiths."

Belle greets them both and looks around the stone work of the Dwarven built house, marveling at the kitchen.

"I've never seen a kitchen so magnificent in either world." She sighs, running her fingers along the shiny metal counters.

"Oi, watch the hands or I'll break your face." the sound of Triss's angry voice comes from the tavern upstairs and Belle startles before realizing it's not directed at her. There's music and many voices coming from the Tavern, they must be busy tonight.

"Next up is the Tavern, expect it to be full of drunken Dwarves all night long, but it's soundproof, so it won't bother anyone else in the house. In fact, you can't even hear it in the forge." Cain explains as they head upstairs.

A group of young men wearing the Tailor's Union crest is picking one of their members up off the floor and laughing, while Triss scowls at them.

"Got it all in hand?" Cain asks and she turns to smile at him.

"That skill set is working out just fine for me. We'll have to finish it up soon, these blokes are even more rowdy than I remember." Triss chuckles, keeping an eye on the two servers working here today. The Orphanage Matron has decided that Triss and Gramps will be full time employees here, while the other two workers they contracted the Orphanage for will cycle between the other kids, giving them all an equal chance at getting paid. Nobody really minds, most of the kids drop by to play or visit a couple times a week anyhow, so they're not going to be getting any strangers.

The two tonight have their hands full, there's a Tailors hundredth birthday party going on, and the place is packed full of Dwarves not just here to drink, but to eat too. In theory one of the girls serving food is the cook tonight, but they're both upstairs delivering platters.

"Need me to get Tanya and the girls in Sunnybrook to lend a hand? It looks like you're all working double time." Cain asks and Triss shakes her head.

"We're good, we just had a big food order come up all at once. After this they should be able to manage." The Dwarf laughs, pouring more drinks.

"Is she filling that mug entirely with whiskey?" Belle asks, crinkling her nose.

"That one and a hundred more. Dwarven whiskey is a house favorite, and the stout hearted drink it like a fish does water." Cain says and the Dwarves around them cheer.

"That's a frightening level of alcohol tolerance." The werewolf shakes her head before Cain leads her out the other door and up the stairs to the Guild Member's rooms.

"Oh, these are nice. All the exotic wood smells so good. The Elves like just one sort of wood per building, but this, it all blends together. I can still pick out the individual rooms though." Belle explains, looking through the empty options.

"Those two are bunk beds, and the last two are somewhat unique." Cain explains when they're only a few doors from the end.

They quickly look into the rooms with bunk beds, before moving on, everyone anticipating Belle's reaction to the last few rooms. She starts to go right, but Cain stops her, opening the door to the Spanish Galleon themed room first.

"It's like a resort room. Great if you're role playing for a night, but I don't think I could live in it full time." She laughs.

"Well, then you'll understand the next room perfectly." Cain says, ushering her across the hall.

"This is, oh my. I read about this in a book once back home, but it's really something else in person." Belle says, backing away. Cain can see that Misha is somewhat reluctant to leave so fast though. Valuable information.

"Last up isn't an empty room, but my room. We should show it off though, the Dwarves really did a magnificent job in here." Cain explains.

Belle laughs as soon as they enter, finding Nemu laid out on a pile of cushions in her lighter cloth outfit. Kone darts past them to flop down next to the Felian, calling out her Giant Lynx.

"This room is great to relax in. There's a huge game room in Sunnybrook, but I like to play cards here on the cushions, and Vala prefers the hot tub." The Druid giggles.

"Well, what do you think of the accommodations?" Cain asks.

"This is an amazing house. Do you think I could get that one with the Cherrywood and slate theme? It's even got wolves carved into the armoire doors."

"Of course, any of the empty rooms are free to choose. I'm glad you found one you liked." They head back over with Misha and Char to look at the room again as the others disperse, Belle opens the curtains to see the back yard, facing the stone wall and overlooking the partially finished second building.

"What's that house for? It looks like it's in this yard, and doesn't face a street." She asks.

"That's the guest house, for visitors and for hosting dignitaries that don't want to be seen. It's not quite complete yet but it will be soon." Char tells her, looking out at the rock wall that makes up most of the view with a discomfort unique to Spirit Folk instincts.. Kone rarely looks out the windows either, the reality that they're inside a mountain 'feels disorienting' in her words.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 111 - 111**

[Belle has signed a Guild Contract]

[Belle has joined Darklight Host]

"Welcome and congratulations. We'll be headed out early tomorrow to look for Ogres, if you want to call it a night. I heard from Char that you might be short on sleep. If not, feel



free to head to the tavern for drinks and food, or back to Sunnybrook House if you want to play games. The little stairs at the end of the hall lead straight down to the kitchen and bypass the Tavern." Cain explains and Belle flops dramatically onto the bed.

"This is pretty comfortable, I might just stay here." Belle begins before Kone barges in.

"Congrats on joining! Want to join us for a sleepover? Me and Nemu and a bunch of girls from next door, plus almost all the girls from the Guild are there." Kone says excitedly.

"That sounds fun. I haven't been to a sleepover in forever, and it would be nice to get to know everyone." Belle nods, grabbing Char's hand.

"Good, we will grab everyone. Message Lickity and Misha too. The rest should be there already."

Kone has appropriated one of the unused main floor back rooms in the house just for this purpose. It's done up a lot like Cain's room, with pillows and cushions everywhere, but with light paint and gossamer curtains to give the room the feeling of a garden party and not the inner room of a house inside a mountain. More often than not she will end up sleeping there too, deciding the walk to her bedroom is too far.

Lickity is out with Cixelcid tonight, so she's out, and Misha opts out, saying she's tired and will catch up with everyone tomorrow. Nathaniel as the only other guy in the Guild might have felt left out, but Ghaz and Morgan came by and collected him earlier to go do something. Likely a double date with whoever Ghaz is seeing today.

Misha has decided this is her chance, all of the others are busy elsewhere, and the younger girls will never let the ever cuddly Nemu escape, so she's got Cain all to herself for the night.

Once everyone gets settled in, she gives a wink to an understanding Char, who distracts Nemu while Misha drags Cain away. "How about we share a hot tub again? It's been entirely too long with you away here in Graska." Misha smiles at him as they make their way upstairs.

"And aren't you getting larger and larger? I swear you weren't this big at level 10." She asks, rubbing against him as they open the bedroom door.

"Every time I change my stats my body adjusts. I'm not sure if it's part of the class system, or if it's like my skills and my body is waiting on me to level up enough to fill the conditions for a major change." He shrugs, unequipping all of his gear before stepping into the hot tub and holding out a hand to help Misha in behind him.

"Has anyone ever mentioned you're really bad at bedroom talk?" she giggles and Cain realizes he entirely missed the innuendo in her initial question.

"You've got a point no more talking." He laughs, pulling her down into the water for a kiss.

Misha wakes up the next morning with a happy glow, but still a little sore. She wasn't actually joking about Cain having gotten bigger as he leveled up. The bed seems extra warm, so she opens her eyes to find and remove the top layer of blankets, unwilling to get out of bed so early. Only to meet the intense green stare of a set of Felian eyes.

"No fair, you tricked me and got a head start." Nemu whispers from her spot on top of the blankets next to the sleeping couple, her face on Cain's chest, inches from Misha's own.

"You're a Summon, you're literally with him all the time. You had your chance you thieving Felian." Misha whispers back, sticking out her tongue and wrapping herself around Cain's sleeping form.

Some time later, Cain wakes up sweating. Misha is sleeping soundly on top of him, sprawled out like a human rug, and the Nemu girls have collaborated to find a comfortable spot against either side of him. It's soft, comfortable and smells pleasantly of shampoo and body lotion. If only it weren't so incredibly warm. It's like waking up in a sauna. Plus, when did Nemu join them in bed? Cain was certain she would be busy all night with the sleepover. At least she's not draped across his head today, this position is warm enough.

"Good morning ladies. As much as I hate to do this, it's time to get up for breakfast and decide who all is going along to look for the Ogres hiding spot." He says softly, and immediately begins to reconsider leaving the bed when Misha shifts on top of him. What's the big rush anyhow? Tanya knows to wake everyone up if there's an attack on Sunnybrook.

They don't get to sleep much longer though, as Vala comes in and flips the blanket, blowing colder air over them all and informs them that breakfast is ready whenever they've showered and gotten dressed. It's a good thing the tub uses water magic enchantments to be self cleaning, because no way are four of them fitting in the shower, and Misha just threw a bath bomb in the hot tub before directing Cain to carry her over.

Vala is doing her best not to laugh when they all come down freshly washed and pretending nothing strange happened this morning, but the rest don't seem to have noticed anything. A small mercy, given their love of banter.

"Now that we're all present and accounted for, what is the plan for finding the Ogres?" Lickity asks with a giggle, exchanging pokes to the side with Cixelcid.

"One big group for sure, if we do actually find them it would be a very bad thing to be separated. If they're inside a hidden dungeon, all we can really do is wait for them to start coming out. Going in would just place us in a separate instance. Our newly minted

tracker Belle will lead the way, plus we've got a good idea which way the survivors of the last battle initially fled." Cain suggests.

"So if I can lead us to them in a dungeon we just stand there and wait?" Belle asks.

"Pretty much. If we get lucky, we can wipe out an entire army a handful at a time when they try to exit." Cain agrees.

"Me and Ragnar can see the Guild messages, so if you lot get in trouble, we will go to the Sunnybrook Hall and give them all the location information to send out an attack to rescue you. If there's enough Ogres we might even get a reward out of the rescue attempt instead of having to pay a quest fee." Gramps adds.

"That's not a bad plan. can you send Guild messages in wolf form, or are your senses just as good in human form?" Cain asks Belle.

"I can send messages in Wolf form no problem. You can't really understand me if I talk though, it's like arguing with a husky." Belle explains.

With those basics settled, and every member willing to go on the mission, they all dig into their meals, getting mentally prepared for the journey ahead.. The kitchen has their physical preparation done, food stores very well inside a transfers inventory and they've gone all out with the meals and snacks.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 112 - 112

Arguing with a Husky was a great description, because that's exactly what Belle's wolf form looks like. The same Grey and white soft fur, the same distinctive pattern. She's even the same size, smaller than Cain had expected a wolf to be, but not by too much. It suits her human form's short stature though.

They've made their way out the East gate to the spot where the last remnants of the force with the siege weapons fled from. Even to the untrained eyes of Cain and Misha, this part of the journey is easy. The ground is heavily trampled and the direction of travel in the ravaged field is clearly evident.

They set out at a walk, not being in any particular hurry, and not wanting to miss any signs of trickery or diversion. Clearly this trip will get more difficult if they have lost the Elves chasing them so many times in the past.

The head out into the jungle, the retreating Ogres traveling as one group for about an hour before Belle smells that a single powerful Ogre has broken off from the group. That seems like the most suspicious and probable lead to Cain, surely everyone else who tried could track the main army.

There are no foot prints, or broken branches to follow, the trail erased by magic according to Belle, but she can still smell the Ogre on the surrounding trees. They move steadily onwards, trusting her nose despite the lack of evidence and eventually come to a stream. The perfect spot to wash away a scent trail.

"Magic was used this way. I can still feel the traces." Elmira calls from a few dozen meters downstream. Pixies are very sensitive to magic usage, so the Ogre they're chasing must have needed to renew its spell, or use extra mana to erase the deep foot prints an Ogre would have left in the mud.

Only a few meters from the hovering Pixie, Belle picks up the scent again now joined by a second scent, a goblin of some sort that either walked very slowly or traveled this route twice. This makes the trail easier to follow, but Belle is still focused on the Ogre, worried that the second scent is diversion.

The concern seems justified, as the trail soon crosses the path of the second group of survivors and the goblin breaks off, before something starts obscuring their trail. The Guild continues following the lone Ogre, wondering where it is going when the scent trail suddenly dead ends at a cliff face. Searching the top reveals nothing, so it didn't go around, and it doesn't seem to have gone back.

Elmira comes to their rescue again, pointing towards a large rock that makes up a portion of the shale cliff and saying she feels magic behind it.

Cain and Cixelcid each grab a side and pick the Boulder up, moving it aside and revealing what is clearly a dungeon entrance. If they didn't have a Pixie along they'd never have noticed the dungeon hidden behind that rock. Looking at the shape, and then at the portal behind it, they realize that if you have arms long enough to reach a meter and a half into a hole in the rock, you could touch the portal and enter the dungeon without moving the Boulder. Just right for an Ogre. Their opponent is a smart one.

"I'm going to step inside and see what the dungeon is like, then come right back." Cain says, looking at the Dungeon entrance.

"Be safe. We'll be right here waiting." Misha smiles, knowing that of anyone here he's the safest to go exploring the unknown.

[Welcome to the Trial of the Ogre Kings Raid]

[Guild Group confirmed: Preparing Trial]

[Quest available: Clear the Trial] Grants Competition Reward, Guild Title, Guild Experience, Members only Item drop.

[It's an Ogre Raid. Trial of the Ogre Kings. I think the reason they've never found a huge Ogre army is because it didn't exist. The King must have a method of bringing all the residents of the dungeon under his command and walking out of the dungeon with them to attack Sunnybrook.] Cain sends in Guild chat. That would also explain why they didn't find the survivors, 24 hours after a dungeon is cleared it resets, so the Ogres taken outside most likely simply disappear.

[Is there a Quest? I love Guild Quests, they always give us something really cool, like Guild Wide drop rate bonuses] Mythryll sends back.

[We get a drop rate bonus?] that would be Belle, guess the sleepover chat didn't cover the topic.

[Yes, for the Guild, and many of the members have their own Iron Man Titles that give a party wide bonus.] Misha responds.

[Should we do that now? The Ogres usually only attack every few days.] Lickity asks.

[Might as well, everyone follow me into the Dungeon, and put the Boulder back near the original spot in case the Ogres come out before us. I don't want to be ambushed on the way out.]

A minute later the stone is placed and the entire Guild is inside the dungeon. Belle looks a little nervous, having never fought along side them before, but she does at least have a vague knowledge of their ability, having lived in Sunnybrook and assisted in the defense multiple times, though most days she was forced to grind in the dungeon all day along with four other unfortunate souls to cover the expenses from her contract.

Cain calls out all the summons, ignoring Kone's plea to swap the Supporter clones of her for one of Belle, so she'd have a puppy to cuddle.

"After the dungeon. Cuddle your bear, or the Giant Lynx, or the real Belle if she'll let you. For now we need the extra healers." Cain tells her and Belle gives a barking laugh before shifting back into human form.

"She really is as obsessed with Fluffy things as they said." The Ranger laughs.

"Maybe I spoil her too much, but she's a good Healer." Cain shrugs and Kone sticks out her tongue at him.

"You'll get used to them, they're all a little odd." Char stage whispers and Lickity laughs.

"So says the reborn Empress who is only marginally less fond of fluffy things than our Druid."

Belle bursts into laughter at their antics, no way will life be boring around this Guild, and they seem to treat everyone pretty well.

"Enough play time, let's get things moving." Cain says, stepping forward with the Wrath Bringers in the vanguard.

[Guild Quest Accepted]

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 113 - 113

[Difficulty scaled to Party Ability. Dungeon Level Updated to Level 99]

Wait, what? It automatically set the dungeon difficulty to almost 20 levels above the majority of their members?

"Uh guys? You know I'm level 55, right?" Belle asks.

"Mythryll, put the Treants on defense. I'm sorry Belle, but you're going to get just a couple notifications. Consider it a form of initiation into the Guild. It seems to happen to every new member we get." Cain calls out as a group of armored Ogres appear in the room.

The first group goes down fairly easily under the weight of their combined firepower. But as soon as they start falling, more start appearing. Is this the trial of Ogre Kings? Being able to defeat every Ogre that comes at you?

The initial spawn of Ogres was 14 strong, one for every Guild Member. They weren't Level 99 as Cain had feared, but instead Level 55, equal to their lowest leveled member. The second group is also fourteen strong, but Level 60, and quickly dies to the summons without putting up much of a fight.

The Level increases by 5 every round until they're up against a group of level 99 Ogre warriors. The Guild has significant buffs, and with [Cripple] from the Plague Sorcerers plus Nemu slowing them and decreasing their damage done, they're still not horribly

difficult. The room isn't huge, and their area effect spells cover almost everything, giving the Ogres no room to retreat.

"Hey, I got a spell book!" Belle cheers and links it in Guild Chat.

[Book of Rending Arrow] Fires an arrow that explodes near the target, causing shrapnel damage and [Bleed] to all opponents within 5 meters.

"That's pretty good. Learn it up." Mythryll smiles, looking back at where she's cradled in the limbs of a Treant. Using the book might take a while, she's already flooded in notifications, and using a skill or spell book generates even more. So who knows at what point during the battle the book actually dropped.

The Level 99 wave of Ogres is now cleared, and Cain brings up everyone's status to make sure they're all good. Most of them are over 80 percent mana, and they're all fully healed, which is a bonus.

[Solo Combat Trial cleared: Multiple opponent Trials begin in 20 seconds]

"Multiple combat? I'm not sure I like the sound of that. But if they're testing us this hard, the reward item for the Guild must be pretty good, right?" Misha asks.

"We can only hope. But if that was the one on one, with fourteen opponents, I think the next will be twenty eight." Cixelcid points out, bursting her hopeful bubble.

Cixelcid was right, once the twenty seconds are up, 28 Level 55 Ogres spawn and the walls of the room expand a dozen meters backwards, giving them room to fight.

[Level Up] that's Level 81 for Cain, and the Trial seems to just be getting started.

Two on one, they actually need to move all their Melee fighters forward, as the Eight Greater demons can't hold that many large enemies. But with Cixelcid and both Vala twins plus Dimnys spread out they're doing better. The bears, extra Treants and Candia are all in support positions, helping the more Tank type melee fighters.

Cain is considering switching the Lamia Scourge Casters for something more durable and melee oriented, but things aren't that dire yet. The passive healing coming in is still quite impressive, letting the healers top off their mana until the Level 85 wave of Ogres when they start using a bit more than they're regenerating.

Maybe bringing the entire membership of the Guild with them today wasn't the absolute best choice ever, but who is to say they'd still have gotten the quest if they didn't?

For the Level 90 wave Cain does switch the Scourge Casters for Lesser Blighted Paladins. They do very little for damage, but they can heal themselves and they can



really take a hit. Fighting them in the Demon Raid took time, as they liked to hide behind their shields and were immune to stun, poison and curse type effects.

They're bringing that brick wall energy to the Ogres today. They're as big as humans, but no brighter than the average zombie, only following the most basic of orders. Perfect for meat shields. The Ogres are getting frustrated with them in a hurry, smashing, stomping and swearing at the armor clad masses of putrid flesh. Belle has resorted to plugging her nose with cloth and covering her face to make the smell of damaged Plague Demon tolerable to her enhanced senses.

With the extra fighters up front, a lot of the pressure is taken off the other party members, letting them do more than just defend, and the damage starts to pick back up again.

Level 90 is defeated and they're into Level 95 Ogres when everyone's favorite notification comes again.

[Level Up]

Just how much experience is this dungeon giving? Is there a bonus from the quest or something? A level and a bit already after Level 80 is a crazy rate of progression. Cain hopes Belle is alright, there's a chime that goes with every notification. That plus the smell must be a living hell for the werewolf.

The level 95 Ogres are beginning to fall, being replaced by Level 99 versions as they do. Once this wave is done they should get a break again. All the healers are below half mana, but that's not bad if this is the last wave of the two on one trial.

"Hold off on finishing the level 99 Ogres, we might get more time if we kill them all in rapid succession." Kone suggests. They killed them when they could last time, over the course of a couple minutes. It's possible the total time taken matters too though. Starting the next trial before they finish this one could be bad.

"But don't wait too long, we don't know if the trials are on a timer. We don't want to fail or be caught fighting two challenges at once." Cain calls.

They spread their damage so all the Ogres are below a quarter health before killing them off in rapid succession.

[Multiple Combat Trial Completed: Next Trial in 2 minutes]

Well, something they did bought them more time. "Everyone grab a drink, a snack too would be best. Just watch the time." Cain calls, pulling a sandwich and water skin from his inventory.

Everyone is stuffing their faces in a hurry, wanting to get as much in them as they can and still have a rest before the two minutes are up. At the minute fifteen mark, Cain has downed two sandwiches and just started a long pull from his water skin when a group of Ogre Mages and Goblins appears.

"Everyone back in formation. Stun or interrupt those Mages asap." He shouts and everyone curses as their meal is interrupted.

The Summons are naturally the first in action, charging for their preferred targets, the Wrath Bringers each getting to an Ogre Mage before their spell can complete while the Blighted Paladins go for the Goblins. The goblins are overwhelmed in moments as the Pestilence and Cripple debuffs spread through them when the Guild begins their attack.

They're not particularly strong, but they're good at sneak attacks, which might have caught a solo Ogre King applicant off guard.. There's got to be nearly fifty of them, maybe the Trial called for four to one odds, plus the Mages? Becoming an Ogre King doesn't seem to be an easy task.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 114 - 114**

Cain and Char are still chain casting [Acid Rain] when the last of the Ogre Mages drop, leaving the Guild in a downpour with no enemies in sight.

[Treachery Trial Passed: Next Trial in 5 minutes]

Yeah, they'll believe that when the timer is up. Everyone now remembers that the system is treacherous at best. Especially those who fell for the random character creation option.

But, true to its word for once, 5 minutes pass before the next notification.

[Intelligence Trial Begins Now: All members must complete the obstacle course]

This could be difficult, the obstacles are Ogre sized. Some will be a cake walk, like the rope walk that's the size of a tree trunk, or the swinging Axes most of them hardly need to duck to walk under. In fact, they will swing above the Dwarves heads. Others will be very hard, like the climbing wall with spinning handles in a set pattern. The pattern is easy, but they're spaced for a creature nearly 5 meters tall.

The Guild begins making their way to the wall, the first truly difficult task.

"Hey Mythryll, what about your vines? Can you make us some ladders or at least a path we can climb up?" Cain asks and the when Mage down in concentration, sending vibes up the wall in an interlocking pattern they should all be able to climb without issue.

The first challenge passed, they find themselves on a ridge, looking at a field of spike traps and a magma pit a hundred meters long. There are stepping stones in it, but they're too far apart to navigate for humans.

They begin working their way through the spike traps, getting frustrated by the hidden devices popping up in their midst.

Then Cain has a genius idea, he simply sends the Blighted Paladins forth in a wave, triggering everything, before casting a fresh batch and clearing even more. With every trap exposed, they simply walk the distance.

When they reach the lava pool they start testing their options. Vines sent over the pool burn, wind spells don't keep the heat away for long, and ice magic only makes the ground solid for a few seconds, but the air is still too hot to safely pass.

There seems to be a finish line after the magma, and Elmira begins to fly out to check out, finding the air above the lava burns her wings and makes it hard to fly. She searches for a better way when she realizes there's a ledge along the wall, very narrow, but likely passable. She flies over it and reaches the end in a few seconds, but is blocked by a barrier when she tries to return.

[Participants Passed 1/14]

"Okay, Candia, can you try your Tsunami type skill on the lava near the wall? See if you can make a solid surface? If you can, and if it drops the temperature a bit we will make another vine platform and walk across." Cain suggests.

The tsunami makes the surface solid for about ten seconds, but the vines still burn in the hot air. They won't grab on to the walls, and touching the path along the side made a portion of it fall in, so walking that route is out.

Wait, Cain has Demonic Crows as a Lesser Golem option. He quickly switches his Lesser Golems for the flying Demons and finds they take no damage when flying over the section Candia made solid, but a moderate amount when over open lava.

"Make a path as you go, the Crows will fly you over." Cain suggests.

That only leaves him, as there are 12 Crows and 13 Guild Members left. But he has a plan. Wrath Bringers take no fire damage. So he can simply have one run him across under the crows and he will simply absorb the fire damage that he takes during the trip.

Once Candia is across there is nobody left to make the path, and if she doesn't cross, she doesn't have the range to create the path in the first place. Nemu and Vala choose to ride with the Greater Golems instead of being dismissed, but Cain sends all the unnecessary supporters away for the trip.

"In 3,2,1 GO." Cain calls and the path forms behind a wave of magical water. The Wrath Bringers are off at a run, moving from stone to stone along the intended path, while the others fly overhead. They've mistimed the sequence though, due to lack of information.

Candia is the last crow to cross, but the second she does the effects of her spell disappear, leaving Cain, Vala and Nemu trapped on the last platform.

The distance is clearly too far for even an Ogre to jump, so he isn't sure how the test was intended to be completed, but they have a simple method. Cain orders the Wrath Bringers to hurl the ladies into the completion area, before following himself.

When he reaches the barrier the Wrath Bringers disappear, but Vala and Nemu, already on the other side, remain.

Perfection.

[Participants Passed 14/14]

[Total Passed 30/14]

Nice, it counted the Summons as total Passed, maybe they'll get a bonus? Hopefully they don't get a penalty.

The door in front of them opens to reveal a glowing gold room, full of random trinkets, with a door on the other side.

[No More Than 1 Item May Be Removed]

"Well that's not sketchy at all. It didn't mention a reward only that we couldn't remove more than one item." Dimnys notes.

"Maybe it's a Greed test? There's a lot of good things in here." Lickity says, pointing at a legendary crown that grants a huge damage increase for Ogres. In fact, most of these items are Ogre based.

"Votes to just leave all this stuff here and see what the system picks?" Cixelcid asks, the gold glow giving the Vampires red eyes the strangest bronze color, and the others shudder at the thought of letting the system pick.

"As much as I fear the system's random generation process, it seems like the best choice," Cain reluctantly agrees.

And so, they walk through the far door empty handed, not one looking back at the Ogre loot.

[Random Guild Award for Perfect Score Selected]

[Generating Award based on Guild Leader]

[Guild Item Received: Book of Demon Army]

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 115 - 115

[New Class Skill Learned: Lesser Demon Army] Usable from level 90. Requires All Stats 101+. <Information Hidden>

[Guild Skill Available: Demon Army] Summons 18 [Lesser Golem] Demon type assistants. Requires all <Guild> Party or Raid Party. Limit 1 active casting Per Party. Cool Down 30 minutes.

[Level Up]

[Guild Experience Gained]

[Guild Title Gained: Ogre Overlords]

[Guild Item Gained: Ogre Ball] summons 5-10 elite Ogres to a Guild Member's side for 5 minutes. 24 hour cool down.

"What is that first Skill? That is just broken." Candia gasps.

"It looks like my lowest level Skill, but only demons and with 3 times the base summons. I think I get a Skill similar to it at level 90." Cain says, wondering why the information is hidden. Usually you can see the data about the next skill coming available, according to everyone else.

They step forward to get a good look at the room they've entered, only to find they're back at the start of the dungeon, standing on a platform by the exit gate having walked through what looks like a solid wall. In front of them where solid rock used to be, there is a staircase down a cliff leading to the dungeon they would normally have expected to find, with a wide variety of Ogres visible in the distance.

They sit down, looking over their skill options, or in Cain's case, just his stats, while they wait for Belle to recover.

[Name] Cain

[Level] 83

[Class] Puppet Master

[Race] Human

[Stats]+15

[STR] 125

[DEX] 100

[CON] 100

[INT] 100

[HP] 800

[MP] 1000

He's doing pretty well, but he's not sure what stats will be needed for future skills. The upcoming skill requires 101 of everything, so that's a good guideline, but he was going to save some points until he could get to level 100 when he was originally going to get his first options from the class skill tree.

But now he's got an actual class skill available at level 90, hopefully this bonus skill doesn't mess up his options later.

[Stats]+15->0

[STR] 125

[DEX] 100 ->105

[CON] 100 ->105

[INT] 100 ->105

[HP] 800->840

[MP] 1000->1050

[Lesser Demon Army] Usable from level 90. Requires All Stats 101+. Triples the number of Demon Type [Golems] Summoned.

Excellent, meeting the requirements let him see the skill data, and oh how glorious is going to be. Cain wonders if one of the level 100 options will be this, but for any type of Golems, and if the two will stack. Forget that, will it also apply to the Guild Skill? That many Golems could truly be considered a Lesser Army.

"Is it possible to hate and love you all at the same time?" Belle asks, finally recovering from the flood of incoming Notifications.

"Yes, I think it is. And don't do your skills yet, we will find someone who knows the skill tree so you don't waste any extra points. It worked great for Triss, the bartender you met last night. She also got a ton of levels all at once." Cain smiles at the werewolf.

"Way ahead of you. We talked about it last night, so I got a copy of the skill tree from the Hall this morning before most of the Guild was awake. The Dwarves in Graska are really friendly." Belle laughs.

"Should we wait outside for the Ogres or take a break in here? We've most likely got 20 more hours before the dungeon resets and kicks us out." Cain asks the group.

"We made pretty good time finding the place, but I'm beat." Kone sighs and Mythryll points at her in agreement.

"What she said."

"Alright, Vala, wake us up in 4 hours, that would be a few hours before we would need to leave here walking if we were going to launch a dawn attack."

That doesn't seem nearly long enough to the others, but they can see the logic, get outside and get ready in case the Ogres are staging for an attack that will reach Sunnybrook tomorrow. They also now know they only need to kill one particular Ogre, the King. Once he dies there should be nobody left to gather more Ogres.

Maybe make that two leaders, since the last attack had two factions. If they're all coming from here, there is a high possibility there might be two Ogres capable of passing the test. It at the very least, capable of leading the residents of this dungeon out into the forest.

They don't move far, only fifty meters from the exit where they'll be hidden in the trees on top of the cliff. Close enough to intervene if the Ogres start pouring out, far enough away that they shouldn't get anything appearing in easy sight of them. Most of the Guild goes back to sleep while they wait, trusting Vala to wake them up once again.



They almost manage to get a good sleep in, it's almost four hours later when Belle and Vala wake everyone up to meet them know Ogres have exited the dungeon and are standing around as if waiting on something.

"They must be scouts. If we attack now, they'll report back and the rest will stay hidden. If we wait for the others to start arriving it might be too late for them to stop." Cixelcid smiles his fanged grin.

Nobody has as better suggestion, and a half dozen Ogres isn't really worth their time anyhow, so they wait. Their patience pays off, as only a few minutes of furtive glances around the area pass before more Ogres start appearing. Only a few at first, but then a horde of them, a handful every few seconds. That's their cue, the exit is in full force.

They charge to the ridge line and Cain calls out his summons into their midst. Spells and Arrows begin to rain down into the Ogre ranks and the Pestilence debuff spreads like wildfire.. Even if they run back into the Dungeon now, they'll only infect their comrades, forcing the healers to waste mana cleansing everyone.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 116 - 116

The decision to wait was definitely the right choice. The Ogres are exiting the dungeon unimpeded, a half dozen at a time and being cut down as fast as they appear.

The system is simple, the Wrath Bringers have encircled the area where those exiting the dungeon can appear, and the Ranged damage cuts them down, leaving the tanks to only hold containment and throw the bodies in a pile outside the zone so they don't interfere with the next group's arrival.

If they don't remove the bodies, the dungeon will consider the area occupied and pick a random spot nearby to send the next wave of arrivals, which would be a disaster for them. No way could they get to them all quickly enough to prevent being surrounded and outnumbered.

A small mountain of bodies is slowly forming in the forest when the flow of Ogres changes from the rank and file warriors to the elite Phalanx units, the Mages and the healers. Now the real fight is on. These Ogres won't die as easily as the first waves of level 55 fodder.

"You know the program, healers first. Once they're gone the Phalanx will fall in a matter of minutes." Cain calls as the Ogres fight to create a cohesive formation.

"If we can get a bit better line of sight I should be able to wipe a bunch of them." Char calls out, and Vala works to oblige, driving hard into the Ogres in front of Char and pushing them back a step so the Shaman can see through to the back lines.

Elmira and Candia both make good use of the opportunity, the Pixie Assassin actually behaving as an Assassin for once, stealthily following the Corsair's wave attack into the Ogre lines, stunning healers and killing off the most injured she can find. It's possibly the first time anyone has seen her in melee combat and not fighting from someone's pocket or hair. She's actually frighteningly deadly.

The Channeled Lightning from the Shaman is tearing the Ogre's healing corps apart. Combined with the tiny Assassin, they're barely managing to save any of their compatriots, while the front lines are receiving little to no healing. The effect is devastating, plus the flow of Ogres from the dungeon has stopped, so they're getting no reinforcements.

The last of the healers have fallen when two final figures appear. One a head taller than the others, wearing a crown. The other a two headed Mage type in fancy clothes that looks to be his advisor. The two headed Ogres are the smartest of the lot anyhow.

"Spiders, trap those two. Don't let them get to the dungeon and escape." Cain calls, but beyond that, what can he even do to stop them? Everything they have is tied up in combat. But that reminds him, they've got a new Guild Skill for the perfect completion of the trial.

Cain calls forth the new Guild Golems for the first time, choosing Blighted Paladins that surround the Ogre King and his advisor, hacking into them with filthy swords and preventing them from being able to break the spiders cocoon. Before long they've been pummeled to the ground, low on health and roaring in rage.

"The others will never let you get away with killing an Ogre King! Let us leave and you might survive the week." The two headed advisor shouts.

"Like they didn't forgive the last one we killed? Myself, I don't think they care at all whether you two run like cowards or die as failures." Vala laughs, stabbing him in the thigh.

"Any last words?" Cain asks and the Ogre King bellows a pained war cry.

"Ogre Empire will rule everything!" He shouts before Vala unceremoniously hacks his head off. The advisors heads follow a moment later and the battle finally draws to a close.

"We should contact Gramps, have him send out a party from Sunnybrook to come verify this mess. There's still a big reward and an active City quest for the Ogre King that will

give us personal and Guild experience." Misha suggests, already sending the message to the elderly Dwarf.

They make good time coming out, arriving in under three hours with a squad of guards, a bunch of bureaucrats and the Guard Captain himself.

"I don't know why we brought trackers to find you. Even I could smell the dead Ogres from miles away." The captain laughs looking at the mounds of corpses.

"How did you even manage this?" The Hall representative in charge of quests asks.

"We waited for them to start exiting the dungeon. The portal is only so large you see. Then we killed them as they appeared and kept at it until the King and his advisor there came out. As far as I know, none of them escaped." Cain explains on behalf of the Guild.

"Keep up like this and you'll be the only level four Guild in the valley." The Captain laughs.

He's right though, in a raid party, with all the summons out, including the new Guild Skill based ones, this quest completion is going to give an absolutely ridiculous amount of experience. They don't need to know that though. Let them think the Guild has been going all out doing quests around the valley and not using a broken skill to game the system.

[Guild Quest Complete: Slay the Ogre King II]

[Reputation has reached Exalted in Sunnybrook]

Oh sweet recognition. Plus, the Guild coffers just gained an incredible amount of Gold. They were serious about giving a substantial reward to get rid of that Ogre King. The guards have started taking the corpses to smaller piles for burning, but Cixelcid stops them, explaining that there never was a huge army, they've simply recruited the contents of the dungeon to attack the city. Given a little time, these bodies will disappear on their own.

That bit of news changes their entire reaction. More guards are called for, and a construction team to build a fort around the entrance. Now that the Ogres know of the trick, this location is a top security concern.

Mission accomplished and frantic Elves everywhere, the Guild decides its time to go home. There's been enough excitement for one day.

"Welcome to the Guild Belle, I hope your welcoming party was memorable enough."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 117 - 117

Back at home, the mood of everyone has been high all week. Especially for Nathaniel. His rapid increase in levels lately has given him a whole lot of skill points, and with advice from the Graska Hall, he has built his skill tree into a path the Dwarves call the War Cleric. There's a Class by the same name that some get by random draw, but if you take this skill path you can choose it at level 100 during the first chance at advanced classes.

The skill path gives him extra mace damage, the ability to use a shield and a big STR and CON bonus. No longer will he be a wimp beside Morgan, the half Orc who has claimed him as her own. The pair might now be the physically strongest cleric and Mage around. Though a few Dwarves might still contest that.

Morgan is so overjoyed to see her beloved getting strong that she doesn't even snap at her brother Ghaz for calling her Mork. Nothing can bring her down today.

Not only have their battle skills brought them renown, having so many crafters over level 80 has made them celebrities. Wealthy transfers and Nobles have been lining up every morning, pleading for Lickity, Misha and Dimnys to upgrade their armor. Candia has snuck under the radar so far, only selling a few pieces of jewelry, but that likely won't last long.

With the loot from the Naga Raid she's been on a roll, getting incredible bonuses on a number of pieces. Even the Skilled Creation Amulet Cain got back in his first weeks here has been exchanged for a piece with nearly twice as much Summon Damage Added. The old one has gone to Kone, turning her Bears into a formidable melee damage dealer as well as a tank.

Mixing fashions from the various dungeons has become Char's hobby. Not on herself, but the Shaman is quite the Fashionista and has the whole guild looking runway ready, discarding the usual mismatched hobo style that makes most transfers so easy to identify.

Everyone is happy to have her repertoire at hand, they've been the talk of the town all week, and Cain seems to be the only one immune to the gossip. Everyone else has become hyper conscious of the fact they're being talked about. He still didn't escape a makeover though, he just got a more minor update to his fashion sense.

Even the Cold War between Misha and Nemu has died down. Though that might just be because Misha has been so busy Tailoring she doesn't have time to fight with the Felian. Her clothing is not only popular in Sunnybrook, it's a huge hit in Graska and Peaceful River as well.

Cixelcid and Alina, their quietest Elven cleric have taken up the duty as the Guild's in house merchants, delivering the day's goods for sale through the Demon Dungeon. Being able to Summon Demons to assist them now has made the journey an easy one. The Lamia Scourge Casters are a favorite, being decent both at range and in close, and with only a 30 minute cool down they can use them both ways on their journey.

"It's like having you with us every trip. So many fighters in the group that it doesn't even feel like we're in danger, way better than clearing packs with the two of us." Cixelcid explains when they come back from the day's journey.

He's got a point, being a tank and a Healer means they can just bring out a Horde of damage dealers and finesse through the dungeon.

Cain has been focusing on the Raids, doing both Demon and Naga Raids daily with whoever wants to accompany him. Both for the experience, and to gather enough supplies to keep up with demand. It seems no matter how much they gather it's never enough.

Tomorrow has been declared a rest day. No customers, even the tavern will be closed, everyone is just taking a day to recall the time when they thought they might actually get to take every other day off. Instead, they turned the Guild into the Beginner Valley's premier trading company by accident.

Peaceful River, contrary to its name, is a front line fortress city, constantly under attack by Ogres, even more so than Sunnybrook, which has been calm all week. As such, they always need more gear, and more recruits. To the point that everyone in town serves a term in the defense force. Those not physically capable of fighting do logistics and paperwork jobs, but everyone serves.

What they don't have is easy road access, so the supplies Cixelcid brings every morning now are snapped up in seconds. Initially they were going to buy a Guild House there and link it with the other two, but being a fortress city, none are available. Every transfer strong enough to keep up goes there for the abundant quest experience.

For the day off, Cain and Misha intend to recreate their date in the park. The theater is showing a new play 'King Dippuz', the story of the Orc King best known for having 50 sisters and no brothers. Being the youngest of 51 from his father's harem it seems he had a rough time of things while growing up.

The picnic goes flawlessly, and the play is a riot. They got the same private balcony at the Cheap Theater again, but this time the lower seats were packed with Orcs from

Ghaz And Morgan's family Guild who have come to watch the comedy. Three hours of the proud King being coddled, forced to play dress up and deal with suitors for all his sisters was a great way to pass the evening.

Cain totally understands where Megan gets her attitude from now. It seems that her level of possessive and overbearing is normal for green Orc women. Nathaniel is in for quite the journey if he stays with her.

Since they've got enough raw materials and equipment to reform over the next few days, Cain decides it's time to go back to the Beastkin dungeon and learn some more forms. Both Golem and Supporter type additions to his arsenal can be found there, but they're all counted towards Nemu's upgrade.

Who knows, maybe once she reaches Epic she will be less like a possessive house cat. Misha might never forgive him if the Felian gets more territorial though.

The next morning Cain sets off for the Beastkin dungeon with his trusty sidekick Kone. She's beyond excited to try out her newly upgraded Bears in this dungeon, she's only had the opportunity to try them in the Naga Raid since Cain got that new necklace and passed his old +300% Summon Damage piece to her. They're all higher level than the Naga Raid now, by a fair bit and the groups are mostly small making it hard to tell who is doing what.

But surrounded by Beastkin, it should be very obvious how much damage the bears can do one on one. The ones from the clones of her that Cain summons as Supporters should be extra ridiculous though, as the Cloned Advanced Supporters get the benefit of her equipment, plus the bonuses from his own.

The usual friendly guard greets them at the security gate "remember about the Demons." He says with a laugh and waves them through.

What seemed like a horrendous mistake at first is now a central part of their battle strategy. Let the scent of the Demons pull everything in and cut it down as they go. They're strong enough now they can clear the swarm, so the plan is to move around to areas they haven't seen yet and try to collect more forms. Beastkin should be even easier than Demons to complete, everything from fur pattern to class specialty seems to be a different recording, so the number of possible combinations is incredible.

Not just the 250 forms for Epic, the thousand different recorded Beastkin for Legendary might actually be possible. Cain has been collecting all he can in the Demon Raid every day, but he's still got a very long way to go on that one before Vala can upgrade again.

Nemu is ecstatic to find out she might be upgraded to equal Vala. The Demon likes to tease her about the fact she's not worthy of being called Epic, getting the Felian all worked up as a form of entertainment whenever she's feeling bored. Cain can't really

blame her though, teasing Nemu really is a lot of fun. She's nearly incapable of letting anything pass without a response.

As usual, when they step inside they are charged by every resident of the dungeon within a few hundred yards. With a few levels advantage and Pestilence though, they're able to keep up with the flow and still move about at a reasonable pace.

There was a town looking area where the enemies got stronger that they couldn't explore earlier, but today the goal is maximum species count, so they're going to head the other direction first and pick up as many easy gains as possible.

Turning away from the swamp moves then through a dilapidated village full of every imaginable variation of cat people. Nemu is happy to see so many kinds of feline Beastkin, forming grand plans of how the summons could be reworked to be all Cat People plus Vala with a neko ears headband.

It's definitely possible, but none of them so far can match up to the tank options he has as Greater Golems. Her suggestion is to find Kone a summoning option for Lions instead of bears, but none of the others are convinced Lions would make good Tanks.

Something is off about the residents of this zone though. There's a pair of shirtless Siberian Tiger pattern Berserkers in leather pants following them. Not to attack, but posing provocatively and rubbing up against buildings.

Kone realizes what's going on a second before Cain does "Hey Nemu, you've got admirers. Are you sure you're not going to go say hello?" The Druid giggles.

"Those two? They're barely even grown, still juveniles. Send their big, strapping fathers around and I might be interested." The Felian says with scorn and the two slink away.

How do you even tell their age anyhow? They're covered in fur.. They looked strong and capable to Cain, but they're definitely sulking at Nemu's rejection like a pair of high school jocks who lost the big game.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 118 - 118

After the village full of cats they come across a torn up section of open ground, like the dungeon residents have been fighting each other. That's new, usually when the



dungeon drives its inhabitants mad they're all on the same team, even if they naturally wouldn't be. But this is definitely the scene of a battle that happened before they arrived.

"Were Tigers and someone else." Nemu says and Vala nods agreement. So the dungeons control must be weak, or something unique is going on here. They did have the incident with the posing boys preferring flirting to fighting earlier too.

This dark forest feels like an extension of the one behind them by the swamp, full of wolf and spider species. Which makes Cain wonder how big this dungeon actually is. The Dwarves don't often go far from the entrance because the Beastkin get tougher, but it might be just as massive as the Demon Dungeon.

They can explore that later though, Cain had recorded over 200 varieties of Beastkin now and they can hear an encampment. Cain motions everyone to stay behind while he sneaks forward to take a look.

From his spot in the trees he can see dozens of mostly human type Beastkin. 29 different race and class combinations, all Supporters. They're chatting away about their hunting trip to what they call the nature preserve, and have all the self awareness of a bunch of lost tourists.

What in the world is going on in this dungeon?

There's a bunch of covered wooden wagons with high sides, so Cain decides to risk sneaking through to inspect them. Maybe the contents will give him a clue. Getting close he finds the wagons are drawn by level 100 Centaurs with their hands bound to the draw bar, preventing them from escaping. The notice Cain, but only smile and look away.

Looks like the Centaurs are on his side today. He flags them as neutral after recording them, so his summons won't attack them unless attacked first.

The wagons contain bound and drugged fully furred type Beastkin. Are these slave traders? Their talk made them sound like trophy hunters. When Cain circles the last wagon and sees that they're roasting a small crocodile type Beastkin for dinner he decides it's better to just kill them all and ask the Centaurs what's going on.

Back in the woods, Kone and the others are in full agreement, these aren't sane dungeon monsters, they're just different kind of crazy.

The Golems surround the camp while Cain verifies that all the prisoners and Centaurs are flagged neutral. Once he's sure, they descend on the camp from all sides at once. They don't even have a chance to raise an alarm, much less put up a fight before being wiped out.

"Can you explain to me what's going on here?" Cain asks the centaur that smiled at him, indicating the camp.

"This is the game preserve. The Beast Lords, like the ones you killed here raise their more bestial Kin for sport and food. Some they have captured and keep as pets or Beasts of burden, like they did to the Centaurs." He struggles to get the words out, the effects of the dungeon clearly strong on his mind.

"How big is this dungeon?" Kone asks, hoping he knows and can answer.

"Three bosses territory. Now, free me and I swear on centaur honor we will return to our people."

Three bosses territory? That means this is most likely a huge boss based dungeon. It's just that nobody has been fully clearing it. Cain signals the Wrath Bringers and they cut the Centaurs free, letting them run off.

"What do we do with the others? They're dungeon crazy." Vala asks.

"If we can't get through to them, leave them. No need to let them free to cause chaos. We're headed up this road towards wherever those hunters came from. We might be the first to actually attempt to take out one of the bosses here."

Dungeons are generally set up to challenge a five person party of equal level. Even though the boss area will be higher level than them, much more difficult than the entry area, there are many more than five of them.

Along the road they don't see anyone at all, but there are still clear signs of the hunting party coming this way recently. Centaur hooves and wagon wheels are pretty distinctive.

The building that came into sight really was best described as a fortress. Though not a great one. A sturdy wooden fence turned makeshift wall surrounded a low stone building with a well manicured French garden in the back. Guards are on patrol around the perimeter and a large number of Beastkin can be found all through the compound. The overall effect was that of a fortified mayor's house a few days after the apocalypse.

There are signs of a village surrounding it, but much of the former town is now destroyed, with only a single district still standing. Those seem to be the only stone houses as well, so either the wooden ones couldn't handle the fighting, or the upper class group drove the others out, which would fit with what the centaur described. Either way, the fortified location is their first target.

They're not going to be able to hide this size of a group for long, but they do at least make the effort to attack from down wind so that the guards aren't alerted until the last moment when they're charging from the tree line. The wooden wall falls to a single

strike of the Wrath Bringers Axes and they establish a breach while the guards and residents form up to counterattack.

Acid Rain cast on the courtyard speeds up the process and brings many of the guards from inside running out. Unlike the Beastkin in the surrounding areas, these are all above level 90, and the guard are well equipped. Their numbers aren't high though, only twenty have responded to the cries of alarm so far. Cain adds to his collection of summons as quickly as he can before too many of the unarmed Beastkin die. Without any sort of armor they're no match for the waves of incoming attacks, and there simply aren't enough guards to protect them all, even if they were trying to.

The steel on steel clash of the guards meeting the Wrath Bringers is enough to wake up everyone left in the house and reinforcements start to appear. One of Kone's bears is sent flying by a brutal blow and Cain turns his attention to the side of the house, where a huge Wolf Eared man has appeared. He shows as over level 95, and an Epic quality boss monster, the first they've seen in quite a while outside the Naga Raid.

He's wearing what looks to be a business suit with a silk sash across his chest, fighting using his claws instead of a weapon. This must have been the Mayor, or whatever they called their town leader. At this point he's so enraged he might as well have been lost to the dungeon madness though.

One of the Wrath Bringers breaks away from the guards and turns to challenge him, blocking his claws and driving him back with heavy swings of an axe. Even unarmed this creature is an excellent fighter though, and its seemingly human skin is tough enough axe strikes only leave small cuts.

Both Vala twins have joined the fray, using the two handed Plague Eater Sword, gained from her epic transformation to leave infected looking gouges deep in his back and sides. Cain quickly starts attacking it with multi shots of Poisoned Arrow, steadily draining the boss Wolf's health. Seeing him on the losing end of the fight demoralized the courtyard full of civilians, but enraged the guard, who are now doing their best to come to his rescue.

No way will Cain allow that to happen though, and they've now lost so many guards that the Wrath Bringers outnumber them. With the more dangerous targets contained, the Lamia Scourge Casters move into close combat with the rest, using their long bodies as an obstacle to prevent them from escaping, and hacking through these nearly human Beastkin at a frightening rate.

Nemu is playing an attack speed increasing spell, but their ranged attack takes a bit of time to charge. In close against enemies with such low damage they'll have the fight finished up in no time.

When the boss dies, all hope of survival seems to die with him and the remaining defenders fall in seconds.

[Zones Cleared 1/3]

[Level Up]

"Look, I can upgrade my Bears to Dire Bears." Kone says, releasing them and calling them back from her perch atop her giant Lynx. The cat serves the same role as Mythryll's Treants, a final line of defense. But Kone prefers to ride it instead of letting it just stand nearby.

The Dire Bears are impressive. Nearly as tall at the shoulders as Cain, they should be easily 3 meters tall when standing upright. Their fangs look like metal and they're covered in shaggy black fur. Coarse and hard to the touch, they're definitely not something Cain would want to get into a wrestling match with.

"Only a few more forms left to upgrade you Nemu, let's head out and see what we can find.." Cain smiles at the hyper Felian and wonders just what sort of ability a versatile support class like hers will gain.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 119 - 119

Cain decides that a full clear can wait for another day, today the only important part is to get a solid upgrade for Nemu. So, with that in mind, they head back towards the area with most of the Cat folk.

There's nothing in the Summon description that says she needs to be a cat, but Cain is getting used to her antics at this point, and a Lizard or Dog type Nemu would be a big change. It's a bit more difficult to find new species now, they cleared the area out pretty well, but they're so close that none of them wants to move on and on for new targets.

"One more form, start looking for a good target." Cain finally calls out two hours later, having just recorded a Jaguar pattern Huntsman.

They reach a clearing with the sound of running water, likely the river that feeds the swamp, and Cain catches sight of cream colored fur. A level 8 Seal Point Miscreant. Just an unruly child. He might actually feel bad about using that one to complete the quest, but they've been here long enough.

[Forms Recorded 250/250]

[Defeat Target to Compete Quest]

This one doesn't seem to have evolved at all, but it says defeat to compete quest. Even Vala doesn't see it as a threat until it attacks, biting her wing. Highly annoyed, she grabs the child, turning it over her knee for a solid spanking.

"Ow, no! Stop you Demon! Okay I'm sorry, please stop, I won't bite anymore." The Felian, a young girl by the voice, cries. It seems the shock of a spanking broke the dungeon's hold on her mind.

[Opponent Defeated: Quest Complete]

[Configuring Epic Companion]

[Complete: Dismiss and Recall to Update]

That's all it took? Well, the way the miscreant ran away covering her bottom she looked pretty defeated. Vala looks refreshed, like she got a chance to release pent up frustration for a change. Hopefully they didn't awaken any strange tendencies by letting her do as she pleases.

Cain sends Nemu away and brings her back, eagerly awaiting the new skill notifications.

[Underworld Luck] Hidden Shared Skill Gained. Survive a killing blow with 1HP. Cool Down 24 hours.

Companion Nemu has gained skill: [Troubadour's Transformation] Disguise skill. Impart any known Beastkin form on self or Party Member. If used on self Caster may choose a fully animalistic transformation.

That's pretty useful. Choosing any known Beastkin form would be great as a disguise skill. Forget stealth, they could hide in plain sight. Great for running errands without getting recognized in Sunnydale.

"What is the fully animalistic transformation? Nemu, can you show us?" Cain asks.

"Of course Master." Nemu smiles and shifts into a cream and black colored house cat before hopping into Cain's arms. Her other half just laughs as the cat climbs up to take a spot on his shoulder, wrapping her tail around his neck.

"We can't use an instrument like that, but all of our other skills should work. You might not want a cat howling in your ear constantly though." She explains.

"So if your form was Lion based you'd be a Lion?" Cain asks.

"Exactly. But don't ask me to turn into a reptile please. They're just icky." Nemu begs from his shoulder.

"You can speak while a cat?"

"Yeah, it surprised me too. I expected a meow. But this works well for me, since you're warm." Nemu says in delight.

"You lazy Felian. Change back and let's get out of here." Cain laughs while Kone stares at Nemu, envisioning all the potential new creatures to cuddle. Cain shouldn't have to worry about having his bed invaded tonight, Nemu will be much too busy. He'll be sure to tell Char too.

They get sidetracked on their way out, a path leading through the swamp catches Cain's attention. Maybe the third territory is the swamp? This certainly looks like the path to a large village or a noble's home. Just like the path to the Mayor's house location, none of the Beastkin come near the roadway. They must have learned about the hunters, so they stay away for fear of being caught.

The village in the swamp looks like a haunted village out of a horror story. Blackened, rotting wood, scattered lanterns for light in the tree covered gloom and a low lying Mist.

Unfortunately for them, both Cain and Kone enjoy horror stories and are not the least bit afraid of making themselves part of this one.

They see a few mostly human type Beastkin again, what the Centaurs called the Beast Lords, but this time aquatic or amphibious looking instead of jungle mammals. That makes things easier on Nemu in particular, she has zero fondness for scaly things, only tolerating the Lamia because they're her fellow summons.

They don't try to surround this village or anything fancy, simply opening their formation up into an Arc with the Dire Bears and Wrath Bringers up front and waiting to be noticed. With the Beastkin sense of smell that doesn't take long, the locals charge them with any and every manner of weapons, some even holding furniture as a club.

The sounds of battle feel strangely muted in the swamp village, the feeling of isolation strong. It's not stopping the rest of the villagers from charging at them in a rage though. It's like the first day they entered this place, the pile of incoming attackers just keeps building. The village is another area full of level 90 and higher denizens, and they're not quite at the point where they can clear them as fast as they appear.

[Level Up]

At this rate, that might change though. Cain has called out the Guild Skill Lesser Golems as Blighted Paladins, his ability doubling the number to thirty six in total, and that seems to be having the desired effect of evening the scales. With the added benefit of a huge amount of additional experience.

Kone's healing seems to have taken on the feeling of this village too, the Druid adapting to her wilderness surroundings seamlessly, and Cain wonders if she unlocked a new skill. The amount per heal seems to have gone up quite a bit too, but they're a bit busy for a chat. Every shot of his Lightning Arrows clears lanes out of the attackers, but more keep coming. Just how many villagers live here anyhow?

At the back he sees a possible reason for this tide of bodies. The boss is a Legendary Creature, Level 100, Called a [Crocolisk General]. It's calling forth more villagers the way Cain does summons. Examining him, his mana bar is starting to get low though, it's time to push forward and prevent him from escaping and recovering.

"Bodyguards will wrap up that General so he can't flee, the rest of you push forward and engage him. That's our Zone Boss, and I want him as a Summon." Cain says. But he's a Legendary, so unless he counts as a Supporter, Cain won't be able to use him yet. Either way, that ability must be captured.

When they get close the General transforms, having no intention of escape. His body turns to that of a twenty meter long Crocodile with long legs and prehensile hands at the front, sporting claws the length of Cain's forearm. The Mayor was a positive pushover compared to this guy, his savage bite is enough to even capture and shake a Wrath Bringer to death. It goes without saying that Cain and Kone are giving him a very wide berth as they clear out the remaining Beastkin.

Lightning flashes over the General's skin from Cain's attacks, having little effect, so he switches to penetration type attacks. His Arrows doing much better and actually applying the Pestilence debuff when they dig deep. This thing has a massive HP pool, and is immune to poison. The [Cripple] effect from the Plague Mages is having the desired effect though, and combined with Nemu slowing him down, the difference in attack rate between him and the group is overwhelming his natural regeneration.

Whatever the General Class is, it's no joke. That reminds Cain, he should be close enough to record it now.

[Form Recorded: Legendary Supporter Crocolisk General] Requires Militant Puppet Lord Class Skill to use. Available from level 100.

[Class Skills now visible]

Finally, he will be able to see what he can choose between at level 100. They're fast approaching level 90, where he will be able to use the Lesser Demon Army skill, but there are two options beyond that visible, but lacking description. The original two options he saw come available are for level 100.

The villagers are cleared out, and the Boss is out of mana and low on health. They slowly tighten the circle around it, careful not to get trapped in the jaws that can kill



almost any of the Summons in one hit, until all the Beast Lords can do is flail and struggle as it is hacked apart.

[Zones Cleared 2/3]

[Hidden Quest Available: Free Minded Beastkin] Clear all 3 zones in one attempt.

[Hidden Class Quest Available: Beast Affinity] Druid Only. Upgrade [Animal Companion] to [Beast Companions] skill, Summoning up to 4 [Beast] [Beastkin] or [Animal] type [Guardians] to protect the Caster. Quality increases at Rank 2. Clear all 3 zones to complete Quest.

"That's decides it then, even if I have to sleep here, we're finishing this dungeon." Kone announces, petting her Giant Lynx. Cain isn't sure what counts as a Guardian, but the Dire Bears are one, and they're Greater Golems to him, so the Beastkin she will be able to Summon might actually be very good.

Maybe his isn't the only overpowered Advanced Class. The Druid just needed the chance to unlock a few hidden abilities and take the right skill tree to become an army in her own right.

Still, Puppet Master is simply broken.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 120 - 120

There is a path out of this village headed towards the forest where they saw signs of the third town a few visits back, so the group makes their careful way towards dry land. Killing the second boss seems to have changed the dungeon even more, the Beastkin aren't avoiding the roads anymore and they're under constant attack again.

As the ground turns from swamp to forest floor the attackers turn from crocodiles, snakes and turtles to spiders and Wolves. Kone seems a bit sad about this, she was very excited about the shield bearing Snapping Turtles that Cain noticed their first visit to the swamp. The Druid is all about Tanks.

Now that she's got Cain's old damage enhancing necklace, the idea of surrounding herself in indestructible Summoned animals has become irresistible. She's got a point too. Four of those snapping turtles would be equal to half of his Wrath Bringers if she

got the same modifiers to her summons. Plus the pair of Bears and any sane and reasonable party would grovel at her feet to get her to accompany them. Cain, on the other hand, is thinking about how much fun it would be to make all of his Supporters Kone clones and have her at the head of a giant Turtle and Bear army in the dungeon.

You can't go wrong with a Healer that brings her own pocket tanks right?

The fight is starting to drag, like the dungeon is willing to entirely clear itself to stop them competing this quest. Maybe it was supposed to be done by stealth and not through sheer combined firepower? It's totally worth it though. Every boss has given them a huge bump in experience, and with so many monsters attacking now they're likely going to get another level even before the last one.

Then when the Quest Completion bonus applies, they're in for a treat. High level quests often give a quarter level or more to transfers. This one appears to be a level 100 quest, so they'll get the under level completion bonus, plus the bonus from all the summons out. That might be enough to put them both over level 90, just because of random luck in getting hidden missions.

Perhaps this is part of the luck and drop rate bonus that Iron Man Titles confer? Maybe not, random quests might be random, but giving a bonus to their drop rate seems a little biased even for the nonsensical system they're working with. It's pretty bad at character balance though, so the idea isn't impossible.

It's nearly dark when they finally clear the Forest and see what they hope is their final destination. A bona fide castle. They've both leveled up again, Cain now only a few percent away from reaching level 90 and his Lesser Demon Army.

Cain takes a moment to look over his stats and assign the glut of points he's received over the last week.

[Name] Cain

[Level] 89

[Class] Puppet Master

[Race] Human

[Stats]+30->0

[STR] 125

[DEX] 105->115

[CON] 105->115

[INT] 105->115

[HP] 840->920

[MP] 1050->1150

Balanced points really is the way to go, as Cain learned the hard way, receiving two of his summoning skills much later than he could have due to his unbalanced allocation. So evening them out will be his goal for now, and then he can decide what to do with the remaining few when he reaches level 100. Maybe a skill will need something specific?

"Ready to face the Beastkin King in his castle? Maybe you can gather up a lovely Beastkin Princess for your harem?" Kone jokes and Vala snorts in amusement.

"What am I then? Chopped Liver?" The Felian Nemu pouts.

"You're our Epic Bard and invaluable Companion of course." Cain assures her, petting her head and making her purr. The ease with which he can set her mood never fails to amuse Vala, the Felian is just too easy for him to please.

They're not even going to hide their approach this time. It's a castle, sure to have guards looking in every direction, so instead they're coming straight down the road. To cause confusion, Cain has swapped the Wrath Bringers for the Snapping Turtle tanks, the Plague Mages for Crocolisk Swamp Casters and the Lamia for Lesser Naga that they found in the swamp. They're not very bright, but they're poisonous and good with a sword. This has eliminated almost all of the Demons from their midst, and hopefully that will be enough to make the guards think they're envoys or visitors from the Swamp territory.

Cain and Kone both put hoods on, hiding their faces enough that they could be mistaken for Beastkin nobles, and Nemu changes to a more human form, with just ears and a tail left of her normally furry self. At first they think the deception has worked, the guards let them right through the gate and into the first courtyard. But then the gates all around them slam shut and shouting begins.

"In the name of the Spider Queen, ATTACK THE IMPOSTER!" Comes the call from the leader of the guard, who Cain immediately shoots down with a Lightning Arrow.

Guards swarm the area and the fight is on, the party cutting through mostly spider bodied guards in a hurry. It's a good thing he picked Char to clone today too, as the incoming spider webs make a heavy quilt on top of them before one of the cleansing Totems removes them. Cain really wants some Totems of his own, but books for skills gained innately by a class are hard to come by after the initial levels taught in the academy. At the very least, they haven't seen any totem books yet.

"Did you honestly think to fool me like this? The Crocolisk King would never work with Turtles and Mammals. Tell me, what are you doing here, and this benevolent Spider Queen might give you an easy death." Comes a voice from the Inner Ramparts.

Well, that makes things easier. No need to hunt her down if she's come to them.

"Our apologies but the Crocolisk King is dead and we've got a quest to pacify your territory. Understand, it's nothing personal your Majesty."

"The Insolence! How dare you threaten our Queen?" An overdressed spider Kin shouts before leading his companions on the charge. They don't seem to be much of a combat class though, or maybe they rely on poison and the Totems are just cleansing it fast enough that it doesn't do much?

The courtyard is nearly empty when the queen calls out for retreat. "What will it take to make you go away?" She calls, and both Cain and Kone see a group notification.

[Clear Quest through Diplomatic Route?] Y/N

They look at each other for only a second before agreeing. "What do you have in mind?"

The spider Queen doesn't leave her spot, but begins to write up an agreement. The captured Beastkin will be freed, and no more will be taken into the castle. Furthermore, the Spider Queen agrees to end the spell that is driving the more animalistic Beastkin crazy. With the other two Lords dead, she has full control now. The last bit is about her offering surety to guarantee the agreement is upheld, but they gloss over that bit as it's all in legalese mumbo jumbo.

[Complete Druid Class Quest?] Y/N

[Class Quest Complete]

[Beast Companions Skill Gained]

[Complete Hidden Quest: Free Minded Beastkin]? Y/N

[Hidden Quest Complete]

[Non Combat Guild Supporter Gained: Princess Aramia]

[Level Up]

[Level Up]

Princess Aramia? "You just had to say it didn't you?" Cain asks Kone, looking at the notification while the Druid giggles.

"I swear, it's not my fault this time. Honestly." She says raising her hands in surrender.

A small spider Kin in a fancy silk dress comes down the stairs. "Greetings, I am Princess Aramia, your surety for this agreement. My life is in your hands." The small spider says.

"Please, do join us, I swear we won't treat you poorly." Kone smiles, trying to ignore the sad look the Queen is giving them. The Princess makes an odd dipping gesture with her legs that looks like a curtsy and comes to stand next to the Dread Spider Bodyguards, head down like she's afraid of them.

"Our apologies for the inconvenience your Highness. With this agreement sealed, our Quest is complete and we will be leaving your territory. You have our word that the Princess will be fairly treated." Cain says, instructing the summons back towards the gates, still facing the Queen.

"Be good to her, her class gains no combat skills, only a Talent for creating magical silks. Though she's in your care now, she's still precious to me. One of my favorites of the seven hundred Princesses." The Queen says before having her guards open the gates to let the invaders out.

Seven Hundred Princesses? Spiders really do birth them in large batches.

Every Beastkin they pass on the way back looks confused or bewildered, either wandering around or sitting down with a vacant look. The spell must be gone. Cain isn't sure if this is a one time thing or if the Quest changed the dungeon permanently for the two of them, but at least for now they're not under attack.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 121 - 121**

Lickity and Misha are beyond excited to meet Princess Aramia when they get back to the Guild house. The two tailors are always short on magical silk, and the spider can not only make it herself, but enchant dozens of varieties of it from regular silk.

"What do be expected of me here? Will I be Chained and forced to work? Am I to be a broodmare for another Beastkin?" The little spider asks once the Greetings are done.

"No we will give you a room here, near the common rooms and where the girls like to work. They'll want you to make silk for them as needed, but as you're registered as a Guild Supporter, there's no reason to chain you. In fact, you'll also get paid." Cain explains. Guild Supporters deal no real damage to Guild members, just as party members attacks don't target each other. So with that in mind, she's really just another employee, but with a fancy background.

It was nearly morning when they finally arrived home, so Cain and Kone head to bed while the others socialize and get on with their day. Kone drags Nemu and Char with her, explaining the change in Nemu as they go, and trying to decide what version of Beastkin is the most cuddly or if four Giant Lynx type summons are the best call for nap time. The Dire Bears are about the furthest thing from cuddly, so at least Cain didn't need to worry about building a room big enough to add a pair of them to the sleeping arrangements.

Cain wakes up to the call for dinner, finding that he is not alone as expected. Though the bodies next to him are much larger than usual.

"Vala, as pleasant as this is. What are you up to? I know you're not a big fan of wasting time sleeping when you could be reading." Cain laughs softly.

"Nemu is upset she didn't get to sleep with you. The girls claimed her all day. But she's coming to get you for dinner."

"So you decided to strip down and climb into bed to tease her? That's just evil. Funny but evil." Cain says, enjoying the warmth of wings draped over his body.

Ruining her game, Cain decides to get up, but it's just in time for Nemu to enter and see him seated with Vala on either side and yowl in defeat.

"You too? Misha was bad enough, but now even Vala gets alone time with you before I do? Is there no justice in this world?" Nemu cries, hopping into Cain's lap.

"She's just teasing you, Nemu. Now get up, so I can shower and get down to dinner." Cain instructs her. This brings a light to her eyes and Nemu gets off the bed, clearly planning something.

Vala laughs at the jealous Felian and changes back to her armored appearance before leaving Cain to get ready for the evening. He's just climbed into the shower when the door opens again, both Nemus entering the cubicle.

"At least let me help you shower." She pouts and Cain laughs, handing her the louffa and the body wash.

"Fine, but no funny business, I'm hungry."

That was a lost cause, but they're both thoroughly clean and dried by the time dinner is ready, Nemu's fur extra Fluffy from the shampoo that Cain uses. He's not sure it's the best for Felian fur, but having her exercise her new ability to shift to a more human form in the shower seemed like it might not be the best idea.

The Spider Princess seems to have settled right in here, chatting away happily at the table when they arrive. She knows a silk recipe that lets any class use a costume type item, so they're making plans for a wardrobe expansion. Costumes look the same no matter what class wears them, so Char, and to a lesser extent Kone can ditch the rustic look and equip a cloth costume to wear around town.

Char has done an amazing job with everyone's fashion already, but adding costume pieces gives her even more options. The role of best dressed Guild is about to be theirs by default.

If they can find a Legendary quality Prismatic Opal they can also enchant an armor item with a costume appearance, but they've only ever seen one, in the Crown of the King of Graska.

So with that option out of the running, the girls are instead focused on finding costume recipes that do not come from the Demon Dungeon. Cain, Nathaniel and Cixelcid all insist they have absolutely zero problem with the ladies outfits from said dungeon, but convincing anyone to wear them outdoors is another matter entirely.

Sunnybrook is holding an alliance meeting the next morning, discussing who will be going forward to deal with the Ogres who will stay on defense and what sorts of rewards will be offered. Quest experience is set by the system using its own standards, but any sort of monetary rewards or items must come from the group issuing it. The Darklight Host Guild intends to leverage their newfound fame to keep some good defenders for Sunnybrook while they all close up shop to go hunting.

The dual quests in the Beastkin Dungeon have given Cain and Kone a large advantage in levels and power, and the others are eager to catch up, even a little. The system likes giving them Guild Quests with huge experience, a rarity according to other Guilds, but they're also almost always in mixed groups or above the level of the dungeon for safety. This simple difference in approach, along with Cain's experience buff ability has catapulted Darklight Host above most other small Guilds.

They've gotten a few applications from potential new members, vetted by Misha and Cixelcid, but all have seemed sketchy or otherwise suspect so they haven't taken in any more members in a while. They're reluctant to change that status too. The Guild is like one big dysfunctional family, flooding it with random members to fill spots would ruin the vibe. If anything, they're in danger of losing a member as Morgan and Nathaniel get



closer, though as often as they run dungeons together it's possible that she might defect to join them instead of the other way around.

Their final decision on a quest reward is one piece of random legendary gear per party who defends Sunnybrook while the Guild is out fighting, on the condition that the city remains unharmed. They've got enough with bonuses they don't need. This might be very easy, if nothing attacks, it might be much harder if the Ogres come while most of the Guilds are gone. That's the risk they'll take for a piece of Legendary Gear and whatever experience the system awards them.

It didn't take long before the Guilds who weren't planning on leaving have snapped up the ten party spots they were offering, guaranteeing fifty transfers will join combat should the Ogres come. That's enough to take the stress off the defense force.

Sunnybrook council wants the Darklight Host to head up the far east side of the Ogre controlled areas, looking for the base of the Eastern King, in what used to be Troll controlled territory. The council would prefer if they can drive him out but even thinning his ranks so the Trolls can regroup after their Crushing defeat would go a long way to adding stability in the region.

Now that Cain has reached level 90, he has access to the skill [Lesser Demon Army] it doesn't work quite like he expected, it's used after casting, to triple the number of demons Summoned by a particular spell. At the ridiculous cost of 300mp per usage, it's not optimal if his summons are dying quickly, but to build up the force before a big battle it's perfect. He's also got a third option for his advanced supporters giving him three sets of two.

Thinking of the necessary abilities for maximum damage, his Summon Lesser Sorcerer skill will Summon the Plague Mages for cripple and area damage, and Vala has the Pestilence covered, so he's planning to go with two sets of Kone, for the extra summons and the healing and one of Char, for the extra Totems and cleansing ability. The Turtle army plan is about to come to fruition.

Everyone is a bit confused on exactly what all is in this Horde of Summons, so Cain decides to link the outline of his non hidden skills with the Guild. Something he hasn't done since they got in trouble for oversharing.

[Name] Cain

[Level] 91

[Class] Puppet Master

[Race] Human

[Skills]

[Strength in Numbers]

[Summon Cloning]

[Summon Lesser Golem]

[Summon Greater Golem]

[Summon Advanced Supporter]

[Penetrating Arrow]

[Poison Arrow]

[Exploding Arrow]

[Lightning Arrow]

[Acid Rain]

[Cleave]

[Light Foot]

[Reinforce Construct]

[Summon Insects]

[Growth of Knowledge]

>[Summon Epic Demonic Companion: Vala]

>[Summon Epic Beastkin Companion: Nemu]

>Summon Lesser Dragon 4/50

[Might of Many]

[Summon Lesser Bodyguard]

[Summon Lesser Sorcerer]

[Pestilence] Shared Skill

[Lesser Demon Army]

The list has gotten almost unmanageable in length with all the abilities he's gained. But then, so does every class by this level, even more so if you count the single point transitional skills most skill trees use.. If you only count class skills, Cain doesn't have many at all, more like a newbie in most advanced classes, but with the books and quests, he's gained a lot of other good stuff along the way.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 122 - 122

"Couldn't you put them into some sort of logical order?" Misha complains trying to read through the list.

"That puts them in convenient spots in my system display when I want to check up on them. It just doesn't make for an easy to read list I guess." Cain shrugs.

"Forget that, where do we find more Dragons? I want a pretty dragon." Elmira cheers. What a combination that would be, the greatest magical creature known to humans, paired with a Pixie that increases magic damage. Unfortunately for them, Cain doesn't know where to find 46 more types of Dragons. In fact, he's not sure there even is a Dragon based dungeon in the valley, only a few scattered through other types of dungeons.

The group looks over the list a while longer, getting a good grasp on what all Cain has been bringing with him, before moving on to last minute preparations. They gather food, repair tools and scrolls, put useful items into the Guild Bank and finish up any tasks they had in progress, not wanting anything to be forgotten since they don't know how long they will be gone for.

It's hectic, but by early afternoon everything seems to be in order and they have all returned to the Sunnybrook Guild House to discuss when they should actually leave. Right away is the most popular option, but that reminds Cain that he had been forgetting an important task.

"Before we head out, there was one more thing I promised to do. I was going to take Triss through a dungeon to get a couple more levels and finish up her talent tree. She's just a couple points short of a necessary skill for Bartending in a Dwarven City." Cain realizes as soon as he says it that the Tavern will already be open for today and therefore Triss won't have time to go play in the dungeon.

"You know what, nevermind. We can take care of that after we return."

Leaving from Sunnybrook, they begin heading northeast, following the road that should lead them towards the old Troll capital on the Eastern edge of the valley. From there they only need to find and destroy as many Ogres as they can, and help any willing Trolls they find to retake this last corner of their land.

More groups from the various factions will be headed toward the Ogre territory and driving them back all along the border, so the only spot the Darklight Host needs to focus on for now is the one surrounding the fallen capital.

The route will take them though a mostly uninhabited corner of the Elven Forest, and the Fae in their Guild are getting more and more excited about it. The forest is a soothing presence to them, inherently relaxing like being at home, even when you know there are dangers around.

The rest of the Guild can't really understand but Dimnys seems to. She expressed the same sentiment when she first came to the Guild house in Graska, deep within the mountain.

Every farm and small village they pass, they stop and ask about recent Ogre sightings or other suspicious activity, not wanting to miss anything at all. As far as they know, no other group will be traveling this far east, so they're intending to take the time to end any lingering dangers to the locals. If it awards Guild Experience, all the better.

This route is well away from the Dungeon the Ogres spawned from, so the sightings have been sparse, but one farmer insisted he saw a pair of Ogres come this way just a few weeks back. That might be the King and advisor they killed, but another local mentioned there was a hidden forest dungeon not far away, so they're going to search the area for signs.

Hopefully there's no more Ogre leadership in the area, but a nice dungeon visit can be refreshing too.

Belle is in her Husky looking wolf form, since it has a better sense of smell, but she is coming up blank. That is until they reach a clearing near where the dungeon is supposed to be and she catches the scent of a two headed Ogre, not fresh but not very old. He must have come this way only a few days before they arrived.

During that time the Ogre King had been busy attacking the city, but the last attack was the one with dual forces. Cain alerts them all to be cautious of a hidden Ogre army in the area, as they don't know if the second army was from the dungeon or brought with their Commander.

The trail leads to a hidden Grove, as the locals said the dungeon should be in, and Belle informs the group that there are Ogres in the area. So they weren't from the dungeon, those ones should have reset without anything to hold them here.

Mythryll goes ahead to scout, hidden by Elmira and Belle follows silently beside them.

[Fifteen Ogre Warriors with a two headed Mage are sitting around a campfire. No sign of the dungeon entrance.] Mythryll sends in Guild chat.

That's a good number, that number they can deal with quickly, before they can flee or call for help. Cain signals the group to surround them, everyone understanding that this will be a blitz attack. Belle reports no sign of other Ogres, or recent travel in the area. These ones arrived here more than a day ago and haven't left. Her suspicion is that they were left behind by the Advisor to the King, the last of his personal forces, unless the trail of the others was hidden.

He probably meant to return for them, but that's not happening now.

With everyone in position, Cain signals the attack in Guild Chat and abilities rain down on the unsuspecting monsters while Summons appear in their midst. They die in seconds, overwhelmed and taken by surprise.

"Good work everyone, now find that dungeon entrance and let's see what it has in store for us." He instructs.

The entrance is only a few hundred meters away, but in a poor spot for a camp, up on a hill where everyone could see their fire from miles away. The only scents Belle finds are those of the Ogres dead down below, so hopefully there's no others hiding inside.

Cixelcid leads a team in to take a look and comes back smiling. "It's a Dark Fae dungeon, Dark Elves and their pets. No Ogres that we could see, but we can do a full clear if you like."

"Might as well, we'll wait here for you to finish and clean up the Ogre Corpses so we can use their campsite. I'll message in Guild chat if anything happens, so have fun and don't forget you've got the Lesser Demons you can use when in an all Guild group too. Every party can call them twice an hour."

Cain smiles, sending his summons back to collect the Ogre corpses. Throwing them inside a dungeon instance is the best way to dispose of them.

Cixelcid takes Misha, Lickity Char and Candia into the Dungeon, while Elmira and Mythryll go looking for forest gets and vegetables to liven up their dinners. They packed plenty of food for the journey, but new flavors are always welcome.

The rest simply try to stay out of the way as the Summons bring over the bodies and stack them to the side in the dungeon. Cain discovered that simply putting a hand through the portal holds the door open for them, so he doesn't need to keep going in and out, saving them a lot of time. That grisly task finished, the Golems cleaned up the area, bringing fresh soft branches to sit on and combing all the trash and refuse left by the Ogres into a hole and burying it.

[You've got to come visit this place. I've never seen so many types of magical Beasts before. There's Drakes here too, past the second boss. The Pixie might murder me in my sleep if I didn't inform you of a chance to get more Dragon Forms.] Cixelcid sends in Guild Chat, making everyone laugh.

[I'll go in when you're done. I don't want to drop the Guild Firepower too much in case of attack. Just don't dismiss the Demons when you finish, keep them around until I'm back.] Cain sends in response.

The group is all laughter when they return, looking none the worse for wear, and Cixelcid saunters over to Cain. "You'll love that place, every group seems to be a different type of creature, and I know how you enjoy collecting them."

"Yeah, and there's a whole bunch of Drakes and flying Lizards as well as a couple actual Dragons. I don't know if they'll all count towards your Dragon form goals though." Misha adds.

"No more dungeons until after dinner." Mythryll adds with her arms full of plants.

Forget adding to dinner, they've got enough roots, leaves and mushrooms there for days worth of meals. It looks like Elmira found a beehive too, as she has honey on her hands.

The monstrous bees of the Elven Forest terrified her when they first met, but now, it's her turn to terrify them.. They might still be near her size, but she's not a pushover without skills or gear this time.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 123 - 123**

After dinner everyone is beat from a long day on the road, but Cain is still curious about the contents of the dungeon, so he opts to do a solo run. Well, as solo as he can get with Vala and Nemu around. Cautious of enemy spell effects, he again picks two pairs

of Kone and one of Char as his Supporters. No adventurer ever said they had too many tanks, healers or debuff removers with them after all.

Interestingly, he cannot change the summons from Kone's Beast Companions Skill, the only option is the snapping turtle tanks she used last dungeon. Cain isn't sure if it's a quirk of the system or a result of them being the active option when he updated her recording.

The first groups they find are mostly Dark Elves, with spider and Pixie support. Cixelcid wasn't joking, almost every pull is different. Cain is certain he's gotten fifty new types of Dark Elves alone in the first few minutes.

The first boss is exactly what Cain was looking for. Huge, winged, and covered in translucent black scales, a Smoke Dragon. That's one species closer to a Dragon Companion. If he can kill it that is.

The Dragon spews out a dark cloud that does lingering damage to everyone it hits, then follows up with a Flurry of claw attacks while their vision is obstructed. One of the Turtles is smashed to the ground and heavily damaged., making Cain wonder how the other group dealt with it. Did the Golems take the brunt of it, or is Cixelcid's avoidance good enough to handle that?

The much neglected Swarm of Wasps are the stars of this fight. They've got a knack for stinging sensitive areas and distracting the Dragon just when it's about to launch attacks. Weight of numbers does the rest, carving the Dragon apart with great efficiency, if not grace.

The level of damage Cain can inflict upon a dungeon is getting far ahead of his actual level, and he hasn't even started using the Lesser Demon Army skill yet. It's time for things to get broken though. Cain realized just a few pulls ago that he had missed the very easiest way to record new forms.

All this time he's been looking at them, from close enough to see their information and letting the skill passively record it. But in the dungeon, that's not necessary. The system interface has a combat log, with the name of every unit they engage coming up in the listing. All he ever had to do was keep the log open in his interface and the skill would record them as seen as soon as they come up.

With that in mind, Cain calls out the Lesser Demons from the Guild Skill, but gets an error message in return.

[Must be in Guild Party]

Oh, yeah, nobody is with him, so he's not in a party at all right now. Cain is sure there's an easy work around for that, but he can figure it out later.



Instead he changes his Lesser Sorcerer Summon to a Naga Regenerist, a cleric type Demon, before using Lesser Demon Army to copy both Lesser and Greater Golems plus Vala and the Lesser Sorcerers. Creating two extra groups of demons with intelligent commanders and reasonable healing ability. Everything they engage no matter how far away should enter his combat log, so he sends the two groups off to clear side tunnels and verify his findings.

Yes, the forms are being recorded just fine without him seeing them personally, so Cain leads the main group onwards, into swarms of small flying Lizards and young Drakes. The Drakes count towards his Dragon total, but the smallest forms of flying creatures do not. Still, he's making good progress.

Ten minutes and a flood of new forms later, the three tunnels combine at the entrance to a Boss room. This should be highly entertaining. If Cain isn't mistaken, that's a look of panic he sees in the Elite Drake Lord's face as he sits atop his mount watching dozens and dozens of enemies forming up to face him.

"Keep to your groups and advance." Cain calls out, still preferring vocal commands to silent ones. He's not sure where the habit came from, maybe an old anime from his past life where the main character called out his skills? Or maybe it was just to keep his apartment from feeling so quiet and lonely. But it had proven persistent.

On the bright side Nemu and Vala usually answer, so he's not entirely talking to himself anymore.

The barrage of skills is met with a wave of fire before the Pained scream of the dying Drake Lord fills the air.

[Bosses defeated 2/3]

As soon as they leave that room, the dungeon turns to a kaleidoscope of pastels and opalescent colors that remind Cain of a really intense hallucination he once had while trying a new medication in his past life. Other than the colors it seems to be the same layout as the last section, so they go again, finding they're facing a multi colored version of the previous boss.

The colorful skill might be a new form, but it's no better armor, and the second Lord faces a similar fate. That was an interesting change from the usual, but Cain isn't getting a notification of dungeon competition. So that wasn't the final boss.

Turning around, the trippy dungeon is gone and a single room is visible behind them. The Horde of the Darklight Horde moves in to investigate, finding an Ancient Prismatic Dragon and an array of youngsters in various colors. Most excellent, more Dragons.

[First Solo Clear Confirmed: Bonus Boss Enabled]

Oh, so it was supposed to be the final boss. Cain thanks the system for the chance to record more Dragons though. He hasn't had a chance to look at his list in a while, but with the Dragon whelps, Drakes, baby Drakes, and bosses he should be close now, and they've got a whole room to go.

The Dragons initiate the attack, charging into the Demon Horde with claws and teeth bared, casting defensive barriers and offensive spells as they go. They're met with wave upon wave of attacks from the Scourge Casters before the Wrath Bringers and Snapping Turtles charge out to meet them head on.

The room looks like the opening to an apocalyptic movie, fire brimstone, Poisoned lakes and Acid Rain fill the area, with a fog of smoke blanketing the ground. It's so thick he can hardly see the low moving Lamia Scourge Casters until they raise up to attack again.

Every Healer is working double time, and Cain is making the best of his Might of Many skill to drop huge amounts of damage on the Prismatic Dragon, who prefers to fight at range using its magical skills.

Unthinking, Cain looks down in his interface at the combat log.

[Dragon Forms Recorded 50/50: Defeat Target to Complete Quest]

Oh no, what was the last Dragon to engage? None of them seem to have changed yet.

Legendary Prismatic Dragon. The final boss. This could be a very fatal mistake for him, as Cain wasn't expecting to have found so many forms of Dragons in the dungeon.

The Prismatic Dragon laughs in victory as its damage soars, moving the state of healing from working hard to struggling to keep the tanks alive. There's not much Cain can do though, he's already got ten healers in the group. More if you count all six copies of Vala and their healing and the Char clones healing Totems.

Switching the Shaman out isn't an option though, as the breath attacks of so many Dragons requires full spectrum cleansing, from curses to debuffs to poison. She's the only Summon he knows that can deal with most of those at the same time. Cain turns his attacks on the less threatening targets, hoping to clear them out so he can work to down the Prismatic Dragon and gain his Lesser Dragon Companion.

The Dragons have started falling now, succumbing to the firepower of the group, and the Boss Roars. It seems that the Prismatic Dragon's breath type attack is being used for the first time this battle. The effect devastates his ranks, breaking the Summoning Spell and immediately dismissing the Golems and the bears, leaving them with only Vala and the Guardian Turtles as Frontline fighters. Cain calls everything back, starting with the Greater Golems and casting Demon Army on them.

That at least stabilized their lines, but his mana is flat lined by the time everything is back. Even with the increased regeneration from the Totems. Without his attacks the Dragons are almost holding their own, some even gaining HP as the Prismatic Dragon focuses on healing the brood.

Cain waited a moment to regain mana before beginning to attack again, desperately hoping that the Spell Canceling effect, or whatever that breath did has a cool down. If it did it again right away he's in big trouble.

Buffed up Lightning Arrows again Arc through the Dragons, bringing a white one down, which causes an immediate decrease in the healing from the Dragon side. It was in combat though, and not casting, does it have a passive healing effect? That would be amazing. Just thinking of what that single Dragon could do in a raid group makes Cain smile.

Companion form isn't up to him, but he sure hopes that a Lesser Dragon Companion will have a skill somewhere near that awesome.

It takes an entire hour before the last of the Smaller Dragons is finally brought low, and two more castings of that roar that shatters his Golems. So a 30 minute cool down. Cain noticed on the second attack one Wrath Bringer survived, so magic resistance matters against that attack.

Without Support the huge Prismatic Dragon isn't faring so well, taking large amounts of damage every second, and unable to attack fast enough, even with huge swings of its tail, to destroy the Horde of Demons overwhelming it.

[Opponent Defeated: Quest Complete]

[Generating Lesser Dragon Companion]

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 124 - 124**

[Companion Creation Complete: Summon Companion to finalize]

This is the moment of truth, what will he get for a Dragon Companion. Kone had a theory that willpower matters so Cain focuses on what he wants in a Companion and

initiates the Summon. At the very last second, Elmira declaring she wanted a pretty Dragon friend pops into his mind and the new Companion starts to form.

It's definitely a Dragon, thankfully. Elmira's words had him worried about what he might get. It's rather small to be a full grown Dragon though, the formed body similar in size to a horse, but shorter in the legs. The thick tail gives it a much greater sense of presence though, and it's sure to be imposing once its wings are spread.

The scales are a pearly white, shimmering with color in the dim light of the dungeon. The Dragon has entirely blue gemstone like eyes, glowing with an inner light and staring directly at Cain in curiosity.

"You're an interesting one, daring to Summon the great Laura." The Dragon says, looking at him.

"Welcome to the team Laura. My name is Cain." He greets the juvenile Dragon with a smile.

"I demand an apology for this insult. Where are the sweets. Surely a human has something. Cake, cookies, ganache?" The Dragon says hopefully. Oh man, they've collected another oddball.

"I've got a few options with me. What do you think about chocolate cake?" Cain says looking through his inventory.

"Yes, puny human. Give me cake!" Laura cheers, causing Vala to thump her on the head.

"I'm sorry, I didn't mean it. Can I have cake please?" The Dragon quickly corrects herself. That's much better, Cain decides. It's amazing what a little attitude adjustment can do.

Cain brings out one of the cakes stored for the journey and sets it on a low rock in front of the Dragon. She lets out a noise somewhere between a cheer and a purr before transforming into a Pixie and producing a spoon from nowhere.

On closer examination, she's not a Pixie, just the same size. She's humanoid with long scaled pointy ears and Dragon wings. And doing an incredible job of eating her way through an entire cake.

Cain takes the time to look over her skills while she's distracted.

[Name] Laura

[Lesser Dragon Companion]

[Juvenile Opal Prismatic Dragon]

[Skills]

[Ice Breath]

[Rapid Healing]

[Transformation]

[Brutal Strikes] causes bleed on melee attack.

That's not a bad skill set for a Lesser Summon. Plus, she can clearly fly at least in her smaller transformation. When she becomes a Greater or Epic Summon she will likely be an absolute monster.

Laura manages to eat an entire cake before transforming back into her Dragon form with a burp and a sigh.

"Why transform to eat? Is cake better in a different form?" Nemu asks, clearly pondering if she herself should transform before meals.

"In Dragon form, a cake is barely one bite. In Dragon Pixie form it's a workout to eat that much. A thousand bites of delicious instead of one." The Dragon says with a wisdom that defies her apparent age. She's got a point too. A cake twenty times your body size sounds amazing.

[We've got incoming. Green Orcs, no indication if they're hostile or not] Misha sends in Guild chat.

[Just finishing up in here. Made a new friend too, so we will be out in just a few minutes.] Cain sends back with a sigh.

"Looks like we've got company up top. Maybe not hostile though, so don't attack unless they do, but we should start heading back to the exit." Cain informs the rest of the group.

"Do Orcs taste like cake?" Laura asks when they're about halfway back and Nemu laughs.

"Definitely not. They don't even look like they would be easy to chew." The Felian informs her.

"Then why are we going to see them?"

"Because they might be friends with Master, which means they might bring us places with shiny stuff and good food." Nemu fills her in on the basics. Everyone else generally understood these sorts of interactions from the time they were Summoned, but it seems the Dragons weren't exposed to outside culture.

"Speaking of shiny stuff what kind of gear can you use Laura? We should get you some equipment." Cain says.

"In this form, I don't use any equipment. Dragons gain power from their age and Horde. So I gain power from your Horde instead. I must say you're doing pretty well. Whatever a Guild Bank is, you have amassed a huge fortune in it."

That makes things easy, the Guild is ridiculously wealthy from their crafting and trading endeavors.

"If you ever need something specific just let me know. I'll get you what I can, since we'll be together for a long while." Cain laughs, petting her head.

"I am a noble Dragon, do not patronize me. But maybe rub just a little to the right, yes there by the horn is perfect." The Dragon purrs.

They reach the surface just as the first of the Orcs come into sight. 'Yellow Tusk Guild' is posted beneath all of their names. So these are transfers, not a Marauding army or monsters driven insane by a Dungeon or something similar. If Cain recalls right, that should be the Guild that Ghaz and Morgan are in, the one made up of their extended family. But what are they doing here?

"Where have you hidden my future son in law?" A woman's voice booms out in the distance and Cain can see Nathaniel go a bit pale. Cain hurries towards the Darklight Host with all of his summons still active, Laura taking to the sky to circle above his head.

"I know it's you, I can see all the summons." The Orcish lady calls again.

"I think he was napping. Hi Ghaz, hi Morgan." Cain calls when the two of them come into sight. Then Cain finally catches sight of their mother. That is one seriously large woman. Even for an Orc. She's heavy set, heavy in the bosom and looking every bit the sturdy Orcish farm wife. Plus she's taller even than Ghaz. No wonder Nathaniel is terrified. She doesn't look mean or angry though.

"What brings you all here tonight? Surely you didn't come all this way to see your potential son in law?" Cain asks.

"The Tribal Council agrees that the Troll capital needs to be retaken, so we volunteered for the duty." The burly Matron of the Guild informs me with a smile.

"That's excellent news, we can use as many extra hands as we can get. We might be pretty strong, but they've got a full experienced army and a city we can only assume is fortified." Cain gestures towards the camp and the Orcs start looking for places to set up camp.

"You can call me Gillian, and you already know my children Ghaz and Morgan. My husband, Ghaz Senior, should be here somewhere. Oh, there he is, being eaten by a Dragon." Gillian says without concern. Maybe eaten was the wrong word, but Laura definitely taste tested him, Cain can see the wet mark on his face and Elmira is doubled over in laughter.

"Since when is there a Dragon?" Morgan asks, raising a pierced eyebrow.

"Since just now. I gained her this evening. She's not spent much time around humans though, so her common sense can be a bit off. Like taste testing the Orcs. Clearly he wouldn't make a good dessert." Cain says with a straight face and Morgan laughs.

"I'm not sure if the Pixie is keeping her out of trouble or creating more though." Ghaz points to the spot they've frozen on the ground and begun pouring something out. What are they doing? Making Popsicles?

With a flap of her wings, Vala leaps over the crowd and lands next to the sugar addicted pair, producing a selection of carved sticks. So it's definitely Popsicles. Who knew ice breath would come in handy like that? Elmira certainly got the friend she wanted, but Cain is starting to wonder if the system is telling him something or playing an elaborate practical joke on him.

The Darklight Host has already eaten, but the Orcish Guild is beginning to roast meat over the fire, everyone gathering around to meet and greet the Guild they will be working with until the Trolls get a stable home back.

"Are you over level 90 then?" Gillian says, looking him over and Cain nods.

"Myself and the Druid are, and most of the others are getting close. Our time in the valley might not be too much longer, but we've been looking for a few more slow leveling members to keep things in the Guild running even when the old core members move on." Cain tells her.

"You can come back in the south pass. We get visitors a few times a year from the wasteland. But there's something wrong with the North Exit that it sends you to when you level out. The Elders say there used to be a good trading village there, but now no wagons or news come through. It isn't far from the Troll capital, so we could go see what's wrong afterwards. With this many we should be fine even if it's overrun by Ogres or monsters." Morgan cuts in helpfully, a resigned looking Nathaniel in her arms.

"Mom, this is Nathaniel, my boyfriend. Isn't he perfect?"



Gillian picks him up, turning him from side to side before looking over his System information. "He's pretty good for an Elf. You have my approval." The matriarch agrees and Morgan cheers.

"You're too loud Mork." Ghaz yells back from across the camp and Cain tries not to laugh.. This is definitely going to be a fun trip.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 125 - 125

The next morning they all pack up camp and get ready to head out. Cain found a large round tent in Graska that is perfect for the unusual sleeping situation he finds himself in, now with an added Dragon.

The tent is set up a lot like his bedroom, one big bed and a lot of cushions and rugs. Kone has decided that Laura is a summer only nap partner, being naturally cool to the touch, due to her Ice aspect. Scratching under her chin where the scales are thinner reveals that her body temperature is actually high, her scales just give off cold.

For the day's travel Laura transformed into her Dragon Pixie form, mimicking Elmira and taking a spot on Cain's shoulder that mirrors the one the Pixie took buried in Mythryll's hair. While her Pixie form wears a dress that matches her scales, her feet are bare and clawed, having no trouble holding on to his leather coat.

If the information is right, they should start seeing Ogre border guards by the end of the day. The further they go, the quieter the Forest gets. All the small creatures and birds that normally make the Elven Forest a lively sounding place are gone from here, and a sense of danger is left behind.

"Why is there only one of her?" Vala asks quietly, pointing at the Dragon when she finally gets bored of riding along and flies around to get a better look at the area.

"Her form finalized after casting, just like yours did. Next casting she will get her duplicate. I just haven't found the perfect moment to mention it to her." Cain smiles at his Demonic Companion.

"Might as well do it now, while we're not in combat. She's likely going to freak out at having a clone." Vala points out. Valid point, the arrogant little dragon might not react well to being cloned.

"Hey Laura, how do you feel about having a twin? You see my summoning magic clones the summons, so soon there will be two of you." Cain says a delicately as he can.

"Two Dragons as mighty as Laura? The world will tremble at our feet!" The Pixie shaped Dragon declares, making Vala laugh.

"Alright then, here we go." Cain casts the spell again and Pixie Laura disappears to reappear in all her duplicate draconian glory in front of them.

"Ah yes puny human, I mean, Master Cain. This is magnificent. Oh the fun I will have with me." The two declare in unison, leaping up to fly between the trees.

They are playing a form of flying tag in the woods while the group advances, the Dragons flying remarkably quietly through the woods. In his mind, Cain knows birds don't make much noise when they fly, but somehow it feels wrong for something so large to be so silent.

A few minutes later, they both return with a happy look on their face. "There's a village up ahead full of Ogres. The place is totally trashed, but there's some sheep left. Can we have a snack?"

"No snacks until after we have dealt with the Ogres." Cain says resolutely. Letting their newest member skip the first fight to take an extra meal would just set a bad example.

"Fine then. I'll follow your lead, but this had better end with food." Laura reluctantly agrees.

"I thought Summons didn't need to eat?" Mythryll asks Laura with a confused look.

"Hey, don't tell him that, he looks like the sort that might starve us, using cakes and cookies only as rewards for good behavior." Laura whisper shouts back. Cain wonders if she thinks he can't hear her, or if she's making it clear that sweets are non negotiable.

They can hear and smell the Ogres long before they can see the village, they're celebrating something, likely the victory here. Yellow Tusk Guild is larger in actual members than the Darklight Host, so they split and take both flanks to prevent the Ogres from encircling the group. The rest of the strategy is simple, just eliminate the Ogres.

"Laura, you're up first, pass by overhead with a breath attack, and we will follow it into combat. After that, attack however you think is best. We've got lots of healers, so don't be afraid of taking a hit or two." Cain informs the Dragons.

"We're on it. Just watch us wipe out Ogres." They say in unison, leaping into the air.

The Darklight Host follows their lead through the remaining trees and put into the open. The Ogres are shocked to see Dragons attacking and raise a huge amount of ruckus, drowning out any sound the attacking Guilds might be making in their way in. Even the dozens of attackers running through the fields near the village don't take most Ogres attention from the incoming Dragons and the huge fog of icy Mist spreading through their ranks.

At first the ice fog seems to be doing very little, more of a distraction than an actual attack, but slowly the ice is climbing up the Ogres legs from the freezing Mist, slowing them and turning the weaker Ogres to frozen statues. The Opal Prismatic Dragon might not be a large one, but her breath is top notch, stronger than her monochrome Kin even before factoring in all the bonuses she gets as a Summon.

The Green Orcs all cheer in impending victory, making their way through the Ogres from the sides just as Cain calls out the remainder of his summons and the Darklight Host charges into combat through the destroyed front gates.

These Ogres are on par with the ones attacking Sunnybrook, mostly level 55 and 60. The breath attack of a level 91 Dragon was already enough that they were doomed, the massive number of attackers that came afterwards were just overkill. Very messy overkill.

The Ogres quickly annihilated, the Guilds are going door to door checking for survivors, the Ice Breath froze all the doors shut, but didn't really seep into buildings, so the collateral damage shouldn't be too bad. There's not much to find though, the Ogres were thorough, as far as anyone has seen, if it didn't flee, it's dead. Even the sheep Laura found had been skinned and were roasting over a campfire. Both Dragons are standing nearby, waiting eagerly either for confirmation of snack time, or for the sheep to be fully cooked. Cain wasn't yet sure.

The search of the village turned up one lone survivor. An Elven tree singer named DudeBro. A transfer, guessing by his name. The Orcs invited him to come along, but he's intent on heading back to Sunnybrook, fully traumatized by the events here. He was just passing through for the evening and was helping fix the floor structure of a house with his class skills when the Ogres attacked, so he stayed hidden in the crawl space.

The village is now deemed secure, so Cain goes looking for his Dragons. They should be over by the campfire, if they haven't finished up the roast sheep yet.

"What are you doing?" He asks, finding Laura wrapping an entire sheep in giant leaves.

"To go box, so we have a snack for later." She says as if the answer is obvious.

"Just give it here, and I'll put it in my inventory, that way it's just as fresh when you eat it as it is now." Cain explains.

"I knew there was a reason we liked you. Store away noble Summoner." Laura declares in her best haughty tone.

"Now come along, everyone is about to head out. The village stinks of dead Ogre, so we're going to find a better spot for the night."

There are signs of Ogre patrols both large and small having frequented the area, so they keep traveling until they find a hidden and secluded area. Nobody wants to get attacked in the night after all.

The hidden area they find is not large, so everyone is camping in just three huge tents. Male and female Orcs separately with the entire Darklight Host sharing the third. A patrol schedule is set out and Laura declares she will set defenses. It seems she has an innate talent for enchantments, a racial hidden ability. Today, she will be using an area enchantment that will last until they leave and trigger an effect similar to the fog of her breath should any Ogres enter the area around camp.

She insists that she can make permanent versions for items and much cooler ones than this, but a Dragon Breath type enchanted tripline sounds pretty great to all the weary travelers.

With nearly everyone vying for the one bed, the Darklight Host tent is in chaos. Cain and Kone have forfeited already, opting to take the cushions, and Laura and Misha have already lost at rock paper scissors. The competition is intense, but in the end, Mythryll, Char and Dimnys claim the three coveted bed positions.

Candia doesn't seem too upset though, she's curled up with Laura, not bothered by the cold, while most of the others are still picking spots or standing guard. Vala volunteered to be on duty all night, but the Orcs shot that idea down, saying that the patrol rotation keeps everyone from getting lazy and off their guard.

Taking the cushions seemed like a simple solution, but turns out to be an even more crowded option than the bed, as Cain wakes up in a tangle of bodies yet again, but with a furry tail wrapped around his neck and a Felian draped across his head.

No matter what, cats will be cats.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **Chapter 126 - 126**

Their hopes of a peaceful night are entirely in vain. No more than two hours pass before the first Ogre patrol finds sign of their passage and comes looking for them. Then another, and another.

The first few are no more than a scout patrol, ten strong with a fast runner to report back and an Ogre mage for support. The guards on duty take care of them in seconds, but that just adds the smell of dead Ogre to the area, attracting more attention. What the Guilds didn't realize when they picked this spot was that they were already well behind the Ogre front lines, having inadvertently slipped through a gap in their border patrols.

"Mork, wake up the Summoner, we could use some backup on this one." One of the Orcs calls out as a fresh group of Ogres come crashing through the trees. These ones are over level 80, much stronger than most of the Ogre patrols they've faced.

"Don't worry, we've got a solution." The Cleric Alina calls back. Her and Lickity are both on duty right now, so they decided to form a two person group. The idea being that if they get in trouble, they can simply Summon some demons with the Guild's [Demon Army] Skill.

Alina calls forth the Lesser Blighted Paladins and the eighteen heavily armored, pustulent demons form ranks in front of her.

"That Guild Skill has to be the greatest thing ever." She laughs, Calling the demons takes much of the stress off of the few tanks that are on duty right now.

"Wait, anyone in the Guild can Summon up a dozen Demons? What sort of insanity is that?" Morgan calls out, casting a barrage of Flaming Orbs into the Ogres.

"We were all together doing a group quest and things got out of hand. The Quest gave the Guild this skill as a reward for perfect completion. What's even better is they last until they're killed. We don't even have to worry about being left alone with the skill on cool down as long as I keep up the healing." Alina explains.

With the Blighted Paladins on the front lines, Lickity is able to go all out with her extra strength basic attack. She might not have much variety in her skills, but that one particular Arc of energy is completely Maxed out, with every possible enhancement added. Even her gear has all been carefully tailored to compliment her single minded style.

By morning it is clear that they've attracted the attention of a full sized Ogre raiding force. They've killed nearly a hundred scouts already, and they're still seeing signs of more.

"We should get to a more defensible spot. Hiding isn't working, and we need to clean up the Ogre infestation anyhow." Cain suggests, and Ghaz Senior takes out a hand drawn map.

"How about here by the river? It leaves us on a plateau with a vertical cliff behind us, so they won't be coming that way, and the easiest route for them to move a large force will be through the river valley, where we can attack down at them." Ghaz points to the various locations indicated and the group nods along.

"Sounds like the best plan we have. Let's get up on to the plateau and I'll call out the main force of the Summons. That should be enough to hold them in the valley while the rest of us attack from the high ground." Cain agrees.

They've only just finished packing up to move when Elmira sounds the alarm "Incoming, roughly 200 Ogres in a detachment, they'll be here in five minutes from the west." At least that all lets them retreat in the direction they want, but the Summons aren't going to be able to wait until they get to the plateau.

"Everyone start moving, the summons will surround our group with a heavy tank presence in the West side. When they catch us, we can fight the moving battle towards the river." Cain calls out, and everyone begins to get themselves into combat formations based on the expected fight.

Moving quickly, they manage to get a good distance away from their camp, and the bodies that are luring in more Ogres, before the patrol catches up to them.

"Darklight Host, pair off. If the Ogre numbers start getting too high, start summoning the Demon Army with the Guild Skill." He calls out. That skill definitely wasn't balanced with open world fighting in mind. Or maybe it was and armies of transfers and system users are supposed to be ridiculously overpowered.

The groups are formed mostly based on everyone's day to day interaction and combat roles. This leaves Cain and Kone together, as would be customary if they were running a dungeon today. It works though, in combat they have so much experience fighting side by side that is almost impossible to tell who is commanding what. She understands all his battle tactics and his way of thinking so well that it just flows naturally.

The incoming Ogres are met with a field of Ice Fog spreading through the trees, before a wave of Demons and Snapping Turtles crashes into them. It's a fighting retreat, keeping the Ogres from forming up to defend themselves unless they're willing to risk letting their target get away. The melee fighters hit and run the Ogre flanks, while the tanks, both Summoned and Living, give way every chance they get.

The technique has the dim witted monsters in disarray and they're easily dispatched in only a few minutes.

"Laura, Elmira, scout up ahead and try not to be noticed. Let us know if they're going to intercept us along the way. One of the Lauras can head to our final destination too, make sure there's no Ogres on the plateau, and find us a good way up. If it's occupied we might need to find a new spot unless we can ambush whatever Ogres are there."

Cain sends out a string of instructions and the group keeps moving, the Dragons flying away in Pixie form for stealth.

Elmira is the first to return, turning them north away from the river, as an Ogre force is stationed there with what looks like a longer term camp. Laura returns next, giving them the all clear to keep going northeast, as no patrols were found in that direction. So it goes most of the morning, a few unavoidable fights on the move, heading for the plateau.

An hour after the first battle, Laura returned from her advance scouting of the destination and reported back that there's an ongoing battle between Ogres in the river bottom and a force of Elves and Trolls holding the high ground. There's a secondary route up, but it's a steep natural staircase in the cliff face, suicide for the Ogres to attack up. That will be their access to the plateau, so they can join the defenders.

Nothing is ever that easy though. While they're not going up the cliff, the Ogre General didn't leave it unattended. A supply camp with a thousand ready fighters and at least twice that many in wounded and goblin servants is stationed out of archer range near the cliff.

"What's the plan, Guild Master?" Ghaz asks, having been chosen as the message runner between the spread out groups. Anything that doesn't require elaboration is being sent by him in Guild Chat.

"We will color code the battle, Yellow Tusk can take the looping route and attack the supplies and goblins from the back while Darklight Host draws out the Ogres. With our numbers it's only ten to one in healthy Ogres, and we've got a lot of area effects available." Cain instructs and the Orc takes off running.

They're spread through the woods to not create too much noise in one spot, so it takes a moment to inform everyone and get the routes planned, but the Orcs soon start breaking off in groups of five to meet up at their chosen locations.

"We're up everyone. We need to draw all the Ogres, including the wounded, before they start attacking the teams that are going for the supplies." Cain calls, before instructing Laura to fog up the flanks so the Ogres don't try to scout for ways to surround them and run into Mork and her team who are perilously close.

The response is predictable, the main force of the Ogres are funneled forward to meet the Guild by the deadly fog, and none try to spread out. That leaves only a few defensive guards and some of the more heavily wounded around the camp, along with the camp followers. Not that goblins can't be dangerous, they're just less individually powerful than Ogres are. These ones also happen to be very low level, likely to better keep them in line and prevent them from running off. The Ogres don't exactly treat them well.



Cain switches the Wrath Bringers for Trolls just before the main force comes into sight, the appearance of their long term enemy driving the Ogres into a frenzy and making them forget about the camp they were guarding. Laura reports that the defenders on the plateau above them have seen the Trolls too and are celebrating the prospect of reinforcements while they fight the Ogres coming up from the River valley.

"Take Dragon form, and both of you go assist our new allies after refreshing the fog around our targets." Cain calls and two happy Dragons appear, giving him puppy eyes.

"I'll collect the roast sheep I can smell cooking at the Ogre camp so you can have it later."

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 127 - 127

Laura leaves two long patches of ice fog as she flies towards the plateau. Hopefully they get the idea and don't attack her, that would just be a mess in every sense of the word.

The injured Ogres have begun joining the defense effort, seeing that the main force isn't going to have an easy time of it, and that there are Trolls present in the attacking force. In fact, they don't seem too enthusiastic about the Snapping Turtles either, roaring and throwing boulders at them as they advance.

The fog is the perfect setup for the battle. Either the Ogres can stay in the area that the Summons can effectively control, or they can spread out and take the damage from lingering Dragon Breath. For most it's not really an option, the Dragon Breath would kill them. Fortunately for them, everything they really want to fight is right up front already. In their minds, they will crush the little beings once they finish with the Trolls and their allied turtles.

Numbers are in their advantage, but power is not, the gigantic clubs of the Trolls are enough to cripple the weaker among the Ogres with a single strike. Plus, there are those hateful little snake women, the Lamia Scourge Casters Slashing into them over and over with incredibly sharp energy blades.

Seeing the front ranks fall the moment they meet up with the enemy serves to further enrage the Ogres. They've won this war, taken the entire Troll nation for their own. How dare these upstart fighters dare to ambush their siege?

A few kilometers away, up on the plateau, things have taken a sudden turn in favor of the defenders. Two incredibly strong, though small, Dragons have joined the battle from the direction of the attacking mixed Fae force.

"Cover the Dragons. Don't let the Ogres take them down with boulders." The Elven general shouts, signaling a wave of Arrows towards the Ogres siege weapons and Ranged fighters. It's enough to keep their heads down as the Dragons make a second pass, laying down even more fog covering the battle front before diving to the ground and joining the melee fight. Their claws tear through Ogre armor like butter and smacks from their tails drop the huge monsters to the ground where they're easily overpowered and killed by the Elven front line.

Strangely, they don't seem to be using their fearsome teeth much in combat, opting instead to focus on their claws, even jumping on targets to Rend them apart with all four limbs at once.

As the fog starts to lift, they take to the air again, clearly intending to refresh it.

"Mighty Dragons, please focus the fog on the healers. The sooner the Ogre Shamans stop healing their army the easier we can destroy them." The Elven General begs, while the Troll King throws a gigantic spear in the desired direction.

"That is where the cowards hide." He shouts. The Trolls don't believe in healers, viewing them as an act of cowardice, relying instead on their rapid regeneration. That is a sentiment Laura understands, she too heals very fast, even without the healing provided by Vala and the Clerics.

Vala's healing ability is an odd one in that it affects all party members, without a stated range. Laura isn't sure, but she suspects that much of her current regeneration is actually due to the Demon, but she has no way of telling how much. The rate of healing has thoroughly impressed the Troll King though, giving him an even better impression of the mighty flying creatures.

"Incoming Pixie." Elmira shouts, landing on Laura's head.

"Cain said you might need an Assassin, and if you're near me I will increase the magic damage you do." The hyper Pixie cheers.

"Excellent timing. The Elves want us to kill whoever is leading the Ogre healing." Laura explains.

"I can drag us into stealth once we find the leader. Put down the Breath Attack while we search." The Ice Fog in the Shaman ranks highlights their leader in a hurry, the largest of them starts roaring out orders and organizing area healing to keep his compatriots alive.

Before anyone realizes what's happening, one of the Dragons disappears from sight, reappearing behind the head Shaman just as a Pixie Blade slams through the Ogre's skull. Four sets of claws follow, tearing the limbs off the spell Caster before both turn on the surrounding Ogres. The second Dragon throws a fresh coating of Ice Fog Breath over the battlefield and rejoins the front lines, confident in her clones ability to deal with the healers.

"What is the timing on that Breath attack?" The Elven general asks his adjutant.

"Thirty seconds sir. Be very, very glad they're on our team. Even level 60 Ogres are being frozen solid and killed by a single attack." The adjutant responds, marveling at the Carnage being inflicted on their foes.

The healing has dropped by an astounding amount, the Dragon and the tiny Assassin keeping the Shamans too busy to heal anyone but each other. That has allowed the defenders to push the Ogres a ways down the hill, leaving their flank an easy target for the Elven Archers and Troll Spear Throwers.

The Ogres seem to have now accepted that this push has failed and are retreating back out of range of the plateau.

"They're retreating, it's time for us to head back to the Guild and get them clear to advance up the stairs." Elmira declares, scratching the sweet spot on Laura's head just behind her right horn.

"If you say so. Let's get going then."

The Elves wave as the Dragons fly off, but quickly realize they're only going far enough to join the other battle down below. The Orcs have successfully surrounded the camp, starting a massacre among the goblins and heavily wounded Ogres. They're desperately short on Shamans it seems, all they had went to the main fight in the valley, leaving nothing back here at camp to deal with the cursed and crippled fighters.

Ogre Shamans have a hard time regrowing limbs, an ability that transfer type Clerics gain around level 60, depending on their skill path. Misha got the improved healing spell closer to level 50, since she didn't need to put points into defensive skills while fighting alongside Cain.

Without anyone to refresh the barrier, the Ogres have surrounded the Darklight Host, but that just gives them more targets to pick from. So many have fallen that the Guild is slowly building a wall of corpses in a ring around their position, astounding the defenders on the plateau.

"Don't they ever die? I swear they only had two dozen trolls to begin with, and they're all still there." An Elven Officer asks nobody in particular and the Troll King preens in pride.

"Trolls are strong. If we weren't so outnumbered by these abominable Ogres they would never have taken land from us." The King declares. Of course, they're heavily outnumbered down below too, but that doesn't seem to matter to any of them.

"Do you think the Beast King sent these forces? There's some sort of snake, as well as the Snapping Turtles with them too." A Troll speculates in a deep rough voice like grinding rocks.

"Those are Lamia, a form of Demon, not a Beastkin. There are a number of Bears though, but I see Spirit Folk Druids, so those are likely Guardian Spirits, not Beastkin." An Elven scout points out.

"Guard the ridge line, give the reinforcements somewhere safe to retreat to should this battle turn ugly for them." The Elven General instructs. That doesn't seem likely though, the Ogre camp is in flames, and the Green Orc force that raided it is advancing into the rear lines of the Ogres, who were already struggling to deal with the enemies they had.

"Send the Dragons to carve us a path." Gillian, the Orcish matriarch shouts and Laura takes to the air, laying down a strip of Ice Fog the length of the battle, first one clone then the other to extend the length.

That's enough to turn the tide, the Orcs split the force in half, stifling all attempts at coordination and letting the side without especially durable Tanks be surrounded and overrun in a matter of minutes.

The remainder try to flee, but aren't fast enough. The Dragons have ringed them in with Ice Breath in their back lines, leaving them nowhere to retreat to.

The fight ends in a rout, not a single Ogre escapes, and the two Guilds regroup.

"Any losses?" Cain asks and Gillian shakes her head.

"It came close a few times, but we all managed to pull through. We will need a high level cleric though, we've got some nasty curses and a few missing limbs to deal with." She explains and Cain motions the healers forward to go take care of their friends.

"These might be just the help we need to retake the capital Your Majesty." The Elven General smiles at the Troll King, looking down at the mass of organized fighters and the devastation left in their wake.. Just the fact they've brought Dragons into the fight changes everything.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 128 - 128

[Level Up]

[Quest Partially Completed. Experience Awarded]

"Well, at least something good came of this fight." Cain smiles at Belle and Kone, the two standing closest to him, who have also just received the quest notification and possibly a new level. Smiles are popping up all over the assembled force as they gather up to decide their next move.

"Shall we go greet the ones we're here to assist?" Gillian suggests, nodding towards the hill before striding away with Cain in tow.

Leaving the mess for the Ogre army to clean up, the Guilds start heading for the route up the cliff face. Cain and Gillian, the two Guild Masters take the lead, followed by Vala, Ghaz and Morgan. Ghaz Senior is still recovering from his wounds, they've been healed, but serious injuries can sometimes leave you feeling exhausted or woozy, and they didn't have a stamina recovery ability available.

The Troll King and Elven General are waiting for them up at the top, excited to see who these unexpected reinforcements are.

"Greetings, and thank you for the assistance of your Dragons. You saved us from being overrun today. I am Sylvia, General of the second Elven Field Army." The noble Elfin woman greets them. In armor the slender form and heavily scarred face were deceiving, it wasn't until they heard that hoarse voice and saw the General up close that they could determine more details about her.

"And I am Thogg, last king of the Trolls. What you see here are the remainder of our forces." The huge Troll with a crown on his head indicates the remaining thousand or so of his kinsmen.

"We've been sent by the Sunnybrook Alliance and the Orcish Council to help retake the Troll capital. Are there enough left alive to hold it afterwards? Or have the Ogres killed the civilians too?" Gillian asks bluntly.

"They mostly killed off the Rock, Stone Mountain and Cave clans. They were the largest and strongest among us, but many escaped to the mountain range around the valley. The smaller built clans are still in the city as laborers, since the Goblins are really quite useless." The Troll King explains.

"That's good news then. An empty capital would do nobody any good at all." Cain nods his head, thinking of a way forward from here.

"Do you think we can even fight free from here, much less reach the capital and take it?" Sylvia asks with a hint of derision. She has a point, they're in the beginner valley. A force of level 90 troops is the very elite of the locals, and level 90 Dragons are an existential terror to almost every city in the region. Neither would be within their expectations, so they've underestimated the two Guilds.

"We can get free of here without issue. When the Ogres return tomorrow we will crush their forces. In all, we can muster roughly two hundred fighters between level 80 and 90, with a lot of Clerics. It's the advantage of Summons that makes the difference though, our Frontline troops are mostly Summoned, and can be replaced if they fall in combat. Even if the Ogres kill thousands of summons we will be fine as long as no mortal fighters fall."

The two leaders think a long while about the information they've been given. An army of summons is unheard of in the valley, a legend from the more dangerous lands of much higher levels, where advanced Necromancers and Elementalist sorts hold power.

"If that's the case, it changes everything. With two Dragons and a front line of Summoned troops, we really might be able to defeat the Ogre army. There were only a few thousand here after the last battle, but the Capital keeps ten thousand garrisoned there to Reinforce the mobile forces. It's a days walk, so if they don't return tomorrow, they will likely come back in much greater numbers." Sylvia explains.

That gives everyone a timeline to work with, so they start rebuilding the hill defenses. The Elves have tree singers with them who can create poles and Spears of wood, a great relief to the Troll forces, and an ability that gives Cain a great idea. Ogres are large enough that creating wooden tank traps, of the caltrop type will greatly slow them down. So in addition to the barricade keeping them from the top of the hill, he has sent a large number of his Golems to construct defenses in the river valley. The longer they can keep the Ogres in range of the archers and Spears, the better.

Is a good thing that Golems don't get tired, because building proper fortifications around the plateau takes all night. It's better than anything they'd managed before, mostly due to the fact the Ogres never stopped attacking for this long before.

"Alright General, Your Highness. I do believe we're ready for the Ogres when they come." Cain says, looking down to see how well the Golems followed the orders he gave before he went to sleep. They did an excellent job. The caltrops all look sturdy, and they've been driven into the ground in the desired pattern.

All that's left now is to wait. And wait some more, as the Ogres don't return that day, leading them to fear a large number of reinforcements will be coming. The Darklight Host isn't overly concerned, with the Dragon Breath from Laura and the [Pestilence] skill from Vala and Cain, the amount of lingering damage they can do to a large attacking force is immense. The larger and more tightly packed the force, the more efficient they get.

To pass the day, more defenses are built all around the plateau, slowly turning it into a raised wooden fort. If only they had the old guys from Graska with them, their earth magic would have carved the approaches into an incredible killing zone. Unfortunately neither the Elves nor Trolls have Earth Mages of sufficient strength.

Cain did record the Dwarves as Supporters though, and Calls them forth to help shape the cliffs and hills that lead up to their position, but he lacks a trained Dwarf's insight into mountain sculpting, so the end result is rudimentary but hopefully effective.

A second night passes in peace, but the Elves and Trolls are getting even more uptight, concerned about what this means for them.

Just before dawn they get their answer. Ogre war horns in this distance sound the approach of a massive force. If the initial estimates of the scouts are accurate that is. Belle has gone out with them, the two copies of Laura in their Dragon Pixie transformation snuggled into her fur, taking the wide path around to see if more forces are coming up towards the back side of the plateau.

"Fifteen thousand are coming towards the river valley." The runner sent by the Elves informs them.

[Ten thousand or so Ogres are coming from the northwest, not the Troll capital. They will reach the back side of the plateau in a few hours.] Belle sends in Guild chat and Cain sends the runner away with the update.

Twenty five thousand Ogres is not going to be a fun day. Not at all. Fortunately, three quarters of the hill can no longer be easily climbed and they've got defenses in place.

The King and General call for Cain and Gillian to join them for a planning meeting, where they begin to go over the basics. The existing defenders will take up their usual spots along the hill side, joined by the Yellow Tusk Guild and two of Darklight Hosts Clerics, both for healing and to Summon Blighted Paladins who can spread a low grade Pestilence among the attacking Ogres.

The Darklight Host will take the back side, since they can Summon down into the attackers from the plateau, keeping them occupied. Cain has also agreed to send one Vala and the Troll Summons to the front lines, while the Snapping Turtles will hold the ridges in case the Ogres brought siege ladders or an equivalent method of scaling the hill.

They've proven to be unpredictable, from swarm attacks to Phalanx formations, as well as ballista and catapults. So Cain isn't putting any methods of siege warfare out of their possibilities.

[Belle, head back with Laura and get ready for the attack. We will be raining large amounts of area damage down on the river valley to start, and they'll be here very



soon.] Cain sends, urging their scout to get back before being trapped down below by the advancing forces.

She comes back at a dead run, arriving only minutes before the Ogres reach the defenses placed in the river valley, taking in how the positioning of the forces has changed since she left.

"Where do you need me boss?" She calls as she reaches the top to the rocky staircase.

"Take a breather in back, we are just getting set up. Alina and Nathaniel are over with the Orcs, they'll be calling Plague demons into the Ogres. One of the Vala twins is there too. I'll be saving most of my Summoning to call down into the Ogres on this side. But Laura can start doing Dragon Breath in the Ogres in the River Valley once they're engaged with the Trolls at the top of the hill. We don't want them panicking and running away to plan for how to fight Dragons, we just want them to die." Cain elaborates the planned start of the day's battle.

"Excellent. I'll freeze them all.." Laura grins, both clones changing back to Dragon form and crouching down to wait for their moment to shine.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## **- Chapter 129 - 129**

### **Chapter 129 - 129**

Freeze them all is a great description of what happens next. The Ogres meet up with the defenders at the top barricades, causing [Pestilence] to rapidly spread through their ranks thanks to Vala. Then Nathaniel calls forth Blighted Paladins into the Ogres closest cluster of Shamans, causing chaos in the ranks as the charge falters and Ogres turn to defend their healers.

Her instructions to wait for the proper timing complete, Laura leaps into the air and the pair of Dragons lay down a stream of Ice Fog the length of the river valley. This had the unintended effect of freezing the river, letting even more Ogres advance, but Cain is dropping lightning Arrows into them, killing dozens a second and spreading Pestilence from the back side while the Plague Mages curse them with [Cripple] causing the lingering damage to thin the tanks even more.

The Ice Fog breath of an Opal Prismatic Dragon lingers for nearly fifteen minutes if not cleared away, so Laura has time to widen the field, until it covers the entire Ogre army.

They seem to be lost, directions are ignored, horns blow contrasting notes and finally Cain catches sight of an Ogre King and his retinue.

"Laura, how do you feel about a passenger? I've found their leader, but he's out of Arrow range. You Frost him, I'll drop him with Penetrating Arrows." Cain calls to his pearly white flying companions.

"Don't think to make a habit of it. Dragons are not horses. But we will allow it this time." Laura declares, landing to let him mount.

With the amount of damage Pestilence and Ice Fog are doing to the Ogre army, this will likely be a single shot fight. Nothing is surviving his Lightning Arrows buffed by Might of Many to deal a percentage of the damage his summons have done in the last 30 seconds.

But just to be safe, he will be going with the higher single target damage of a Multi Shot barrage of Penetrating Arrow to begin, then clearing the area with Lightning Arrows.

Laura swoops low, laying a thick Fog of breath over the Royal compound before three Arrows streak out from Cain's bow, impaling the King and pinning his corpse to the ground. Laura lands, choosing to fight in melee and leaving Cain to draw a melee weapon for the first time in ages, choosing a halberd from his inventory to maximize his reach.

Cain has a total of one melee skill. Cleave. But it is enough. Might of Many makes it a single shot assassination technique, killing multiple Ogres with every swing and Laura cheers in victory.

"I knew anyone brave enough to Summon me could actually fight on their own." The Dragon congratulates him as the area clears and he switches back to his bow. He's had this thing a long time now, it's a bit outdated for his level, but with 99 percent of his Ranged damage being from Might of Many and Pestilence, the bow itself doesn't really matter much. The best upgrade he can think of would be a better rate of fire and longer range.

Maybe the Guild bank has something? But that can wait.

[Ogres are almost in siege weapons range in the cliff side. Trolls will be firing rocks at them soon] Misha sends in Guild chat. Her and Char have taken up their usual spot at the back of the main Guild force, putting them right next to the Troll catapults that litter the center of the plateau.

"That's our cue. Laura, take me back in to the air and let's see if we can find the other King." Cain calls, but the Dragon next to him takes off alone.

"It's your turn sister. He's heavy, and he didn't specify which of us needed to fly him." She taunts as the other Dragon lands.

So that's how she's going to be.

"Don't take it personally, I've got you." The other Laura reassures him, seeing an imminent threat to her flow of snacks in the look he is giving her twin. At least they do still follow his orders, in their own way.

The first thing he notices is that the second force isn't using their horns to communicate. They must have heard the panic on the other side and decided it meant the Elves were messing with their communications to reduce their fighting capacity.

Both Dragons lay down a swathe of Ice Fog as they travel, pushing the Ogres towards the center just as Pestilence starts to spread among them from the Lightning Arrows Cain is firing. Maybe he doesn't need a longer range bow, just to convince his stubborn Dragons that it is actually an honor to fly him around. This is amazing.

The King or Leader is nowhere to be found in this army. He must have blended in with the attackers, or he's hiding further away. That feels unlikely though, as the honor of defeating the Troll King is a big thing to them. Cain has Laura fly wide, looking for stragglers, but comes up empty handed.

"Boss Cain. I think I see him." The other Dragon calls, turning North as her clone sister turns to follow. Indeed she has, what her nose indicated was hiding Ogres is actually a thirty thousand strong army advancing from the North. With the ten thousand they are already fighting from that force, it should be an Ogre Kingdom's entire force. They've sent everything that two of their thirteen Kings have here today to try to eliminate the Troll forces once and for all.

[More Ogres coming. Estimate one hour to arrival. Enough to surround the Plateau, please let the others know.] Cain sends in Guild chat.

[Done, they know, but they don't look happy about it.] Nathaniel sends back a few seconds later. That's fine, they don't need to be happy, they just need to be prepared.

The force in the river valley has dwindled to a tenth of their original numbers and are doing their best to retreat, but the archers and mages have done a magnificent job at killing off their healers, and the lingering Fog and Pestilence are dropping them at a steady pace. If nothing changes, very few will live to see the reinforcements arrive. Cain wonders if that was intentional, the second King delaying his arrival to let the first one soften the target and take most of the casualties. They're always in competition with each other as far as Cain knows.

He turns Laura back to get ready for an even more intense fight, receiving a notification just before they land.

[Ogre King defeated and forces Eliminated]

[Quest Partially Completed. Experience Granted]

[Level Up]

So that's about what it takes at this point, fifteen or twenty thousand lower level Ogres to advance. And that's with his experience buff from a maximum sized raid party in effect. Cain almost feels sorry for the other raid parties in the defense team. Darklight Host and Yellow Tusk Guild just barely fit into one raiding party, putting a few squads of the Elves Elite forces in with them to round out the numbers.

"This is a good fight. I can tell already that meeting with you has been good luck." One of the Elven Elite Mages cheers when Cain lands. He is now Level 81, so if Cain's calculation is right, he should have gained about three levels so far today.

The others in the Darklight Host should be getting close to level 90 now too. Experience between levels had been doubled or more every advancement lately, so if Cain got one they likely got two, maybe closer to three.

Math is hard. But they should be doing well.

The second half of the Ogres from the first group have tried charging the plateau without success and have moved around to try coming up the river valley side, with even less luck. They've been left with nowhere to escape, Dragon Breath on all sides, Pestilence spreading through their ranks and to top it all off, now they're in range of the Elven Mages. Not a good day to be an Ogre.

Everyone is hurrying to get them eliminated before the others arrive, the fewer there are to pass on intelligence the better. A lot of lives could be saved if the new arrivals aren't aware of the defenses set to slow their approach. Even with the extra healing, Cain can see a number of bodies spread out under blankets behind their lines. Unlucky sorts killed before a healing spell could come in.

With Vala on their side, and Pestilence applied by the thousands, the healers of the two Guilds have been entirely focused on the Elves and Trolls. Enough healing is coming in that there is no need to cast anything on their own forces. Hopefully that holds true through the next fight as well. Any battle where you don't lose a friend is a good one.

The new force has taken a five pronged approach. Not encircling the Troll position as anticipated, but forming five separate forces arrayed around them, with the intent to all charge at once and overwhelm the plateau with pure shock attack numbers. It's a good strategy, if they can't stop them from getting up the cliffs, they likely don't have enough forces to deal with thirty thousand Ogres.

Even if some survive, there is no way they'll manage to save most of the Troll and Elven forces.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.

## Chapter 130 - 130

The latest of the Ogre forces are much more organized than the others. All five groups charge at the same time, with siege ladders at the ready and makeshift catapults throwing boulders at the defenders. At Cain's instruction, Laura begins to encircle the entire plateau in Dragon Breath, stretching it out into a much thinner field than usual to cover as much of the ridgeline as she can before the Ogres arrive.

They manage to get the cliff face sections done before the Ogres arrive, leaving the combined forces at the top of the hill to take the combined charge of two sections of the Ogre's army, one from each side of the hill, slowly blending into one. Cain makes a swirling motion in their direction and Laura guesses he wants her to circle and freeze them once her Breath is ready again.

On the cliff sides, the frosty ladders have slowed the assault, hands freezing to rungs and feet slipping off giving the defenders enough time to break ladders or kill the Ogres climbing them. Cain's position between the left and center, with Char at the right is sending a lot of lightning their way, which does an excellent job of preventing anyone from climbing, even as the debuffs begin to spread through the Ogre Army.

Their King has taken a position at the back of his forces, behind the groups closest to Cain, feeling safely out of range of anything the defenders can throw at him. Even Gillian admits that his strategy is masterful. Two converging forces at the easiest to breach point, with the majority of the army climbing the walls to attack from the back.

The Ogres have given up on the ladders, instead forming pyramids for their allies to climb up. Even when they're killed, the bodies form a tangled ladder up the cliff face that spreads with every group they kill. It won't be long now until they're reaching the top and in range of the melee fighters. [Cripple] and [Pestilence] have infected every Ogre they can see, the Shamans unable to keep up with cleansing, instead opting to heal them through the debuff where possible.

Even counting summons, the cliff faces are ten to one outnumbered by the Ogres, but with the two person sub groups inside the main raid they still had plenty for the initial rush. Those have all long since fallen now, and won't be available again for a while.

It's an interesting trick the Orcs learned years ago. Join a group and have the group leader join the raid and the system will count you as being in both groups at once. For most or doesn't do anything but give them an extra private chat option, but today it helped stop the initial rush of the Ogres.

The main force is beginning to struggle, most of the Greater Golems have already fallen, their replacements, chosen to be Wrath Bringers so Cain can triple their numbers, are running over now to take their places, as Cain can't Summon them that far away. This big of a battle it simply isn't possible to have all summons on the front lines, but how often will something as insane as this happen to him in the future?

'No, don't think of that, you'll just jinx yourself.' Goes through Cain's mind as he checks up on the Snapping Turtles that are now engaging the first Ogres to make the top of the hill. They're only coming from three points so far, and the Turtles plus Kone and the Summoned Kone Clones bears are enough to hold for now.

Nothing is in good shape when it makes the top and comes into the direct line of fire for the defenders, all of the Ogres dying short and brutal deaths. On the other side, they're faring even worse. They've had to spend a substantial amount of time in the Dragon Breath, which now extends far enough to cover their entire force.

Laura is beginning to make a two Dragon wide sweep across the army at the cliff face, engulfing them in Ice and lowering the health of the attackers even further. One wave of Dragon Breath got them across one of the attack points with a bit to spare, so only a minute or two more and the whole area near the cliff face should be engulfed.

The Ogres have begun launching Spears and boulders at the Dragons with minimal success. The incoming healing is simply too much for them to whittle away her health, and they don't have the power to knock her out of the sky with a single shot. The two of them have started making dive bombing runs into the Ogres, picking off Shamans, commanders and anyone who looks to be in charge. They pull them back up into the air and tear them apart, knowing that even if the Ogre escapes their claws it will be heavily injured by the fall.

A second and then a third round of Dragon Breath pass this way, and the Ogres making it to the cliff are now so severely injured that they're no longer making it to the top before the defenders take them out. So many have fallen that from a distance it looks like the plateau itself has grown, the pile of Ogres easily reaching the top and extending backwards.

The King is starting to look like he intends to retreat, so Cain calls Laura back to him again, intending to repeat his earlier performance. This time the King expects it though, having his guards form a shield above and around them to prevent incoming attacks.

They've greatly underestimated [Might of Many] though. Cain fires Lightning Arrows into the ground by their feet, letting the effect Arc inward and destroy the defensive shield.

Five Multi Shot sets of Lightning Arrows as rapidly as he can and the shields are gone before Cain and Laura reach the ground. Both Dragons turn away to fight the Ogres coming to protect the king while Cain draws his sword and prepares to meet the King himself.

Ogre Overlord Kibal, level 98 to be precise. An Epic quality monster, tagged as a boss, indicating he has much higher than usual durability.

The Ogre swings its giant axe in a savage figure eight, a flowing path that gives Cain no easy opening to attack. That's quickly remedied though, the Ogre is so much larger than him that Cain waits for the axe to reach the outermost portion of its pattern again and ducks between the Overlords legs, chopping them both off at the calves.

Surprisingly the monster still lives, at least for half a second until Laura bites his head off.

[The fight at the hill is winding down, the Ogres have lost. You can call back your Tanks if you need them.] Misha sends to him as he joins the Dragons in slicing apart the Ogres back lines.

That is both excellent news and a great idea. Cain calls his Greater Golems to him, summoning a fresh set of Wrath Bringers around the three fighters on the ground, before tripling them with [Lesser Demon Army] and the Ogres go berserk at the sight of their reinforced enemy. The blind rage is making it even easier on them, as many Ogres are outright ignoring them trying to get to the Giant Demons.

The fight doesn't last long after that, the Trolls and Elves chase down the last of the attackers at the hill, while the Guilds charge down the mountain of corpses to crush the remaining forces at the cliff. Not a single Ogre survived to flee the Carnage of the day.

[Ogre King Defeated Quest Partially Cleared]

[Rescue the Troll King Quest Cleared]

[Level Up]

So there were two quests in action, both the one from Sunnybrook plus a hidden one to rescue the Troll King? No wonder the experience was so good.

"How did everyone do?" Cain asks with a weary sigh once the stragglers are dead and the two Guilds have joined up again.

"I got Level 90!" Belle cheers. She was the lowest level among them by a little bit, so everyone else should be Level 91 or 92, with Cain and Kone at level 94.



"I made Level 93. Not long now until the Yellow Tusk will expand beyond the valley." Gillian informs them with a smile. That reminds Cain, they should check out the city at the exit of the valley and see what's going on there before they're force relocated and find out unwillingly. If it's occupied or worse, become a deadly trap, they don't want to be sent right into the middle of it.

But first the capital, and a quick look at his stats.

[Name] Cain

[Level] 94

[Class] Puppet Master

[Race] Human

[Stats]+25->10

[STR] 125

[DEX] 115->125

[CON] 115->125

[INT] 115->125

[HP] 920->1000

[MP] 1150->1250

There, perfectly balanced. Now Cain intends to save the rest of the Stat points he gets until level 100, in case it matters to one of the two skill path options he can see waiting for him.

The details are still hidden, but they're no longer Greyed out, so he has reached the minimum requirements, other than level. One is called [General] one is called [Lord]. There are a lot of questions left unanswered about what those two options entail, but at least now Cain knows what they're called.

He knows one more thing too, only one can be chosen at a time. According to the tooltip, no points may be put into the other until the first path is entirely complete. How long that will take is not information they have provided, nor does Cain get to know before choosing what he will get for skills from either path.

That sounds about right for this System though.. No elaboration, no second chances.

Tip: You can use left, right keyboard keys to browse between chapters.