

Reincarnated With A Summoning System

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The forces rest for the evening while scouts head out to determine the state of Ogre forces in the area and find a good route to the old Troll capital.

The news from the scouts is surprising to say the least. They saw no signs of Ogres last night, other than the ones they'd already defeated, and the route to the city appears to be clear. There are signs of unrest in the city, but no open fighting yet that the scouts can see from their hiding spots.

This prompts the entire force to move out at first light. The closer they can get to the city today, the better their chances of mounting an attack on it tomorrow. With so many Ogres having come their way already, the Troll capital is likely short on guards, giving them the perfect chance to take it back without significant damage to the city.

Trolls aren't known for living in luxury, but the Elves assure everyone that the Capital had good solid walls, and the Ogres were rebuilding them after occupying the city.

The information from the scouts turns out to be spot on, the entire combined army manages to make it within sight of the walls without incident. What they find there goes beyond signs of unrest, the city has been all but abandoned by the Ogres, with their remaining guards having been herded into just one section of the city by the local residents.

There is no need to form up and plan for an attack tomorrow, they'll do it all tonight. A blitz attack while the Ogres are unprepared.

The smaller Trolls who were allowed to live in in the city quickly open the gate when they see the King coming and motion for silence, or at least as much as is possible for a fast moving army with a thousand Trolls to be quiet. The Ogres decided that the old barracks and training compound on the North side was the best spot to defend from, so that's where they all have gathered, looking out from there in all directions as they fend off the civilians. But their line of sight is limited as they no longer control the walls, so they don't have much time to prepare before they'll be set upon by the approaching armies.

"Laura, let's get this started. Take me up and I'll get Pestilence spreading through their ranks while you Ice everything down with your breath. Then we'll kill the leader, steal their snacks and kill the rest of the defenders." Cain outlines his extremely rudimentary plan. The Dragons are all for it though, especially the stealing their food part. Ogres prefer whole roasted sheep when they can get them. Coincidentally, so does Laura. Desserts are good, but roast mutton is her main course of choice.

Cain calls forth all of his Summons, tripling all the demons. They're not sure how many Ogres are guarding the capital still, but it's better safe than sorry. He leaves Vala in charge of the other summons, much to Nemu's displeasure, and hops aboard Laura. They launch into the air and rush towards the barracks before Cain even has time to register that he's not alone. Elmira has grabbed hold of his shoulder while Mythryll and Kone have mounted the other copy of Laura to join him for the ride.

"I'll call my copy of the Turtles and Bears once we arrive. Plus Mythryll has great area damage, she's Maxed out Blizzard." Kone tries to explain over the rush of the wind. Flying is an exhilarating feeling and Cain wonders if this is how it would feel to ride a motorcycle that flies. The wind in his hair, sitting astride a powerful vehicle. Either way, it never gets less enjoyable.

The closest he came to this experience in his past life was riding his bicycle through gridlock traffic to doctor's visits. Not exactly comparable or exhilarating.

The Ogres panic when they see incoming Dragons with riders, but the wind is too loud for Cain to hear what they're yelling. Mythryll seems to understand though, and she's laughing at their screams. The first wave of Ice Fog settles in over the encampment and Cain realizes this is going to be a very short fight. He has left enemy status bars active and his interface visible for a change, showing him the health of the defenders visibly dropping even before the army arrives.

There's one hapless Ogre mage in charge, but he's more focused on survival than defense, trying to push towards the walls with a group of underlings. That's exactly what they hoped for though, all the strongest remaining fighters in one spot.

Mythryll carpets the area in Vines, all but immobilizing the Ogres before calling forth the Razor Grass and Treants. Kone adds the bears and Snapping Turtles to the mix and the leadership group is dead before the Dragons can even find a good spot to land.

Instead, they decide to orchestrate the battle from above. Cain rarely uses the mental commands he can issue to his summons, finding calling them out loud just feels more satisfying, but that's what he does today, sends directions to Vala to lead his summons to head off attempts to organize defense, while Mythryll is in charge of sending group movements for the army in Raid Group text chat.

The effect is brutal. And then something amazing happens, Laura starts casting [Blizzard].

"Since when do you know that spell?" Mythryll pouts as one of her signature spells is stolen by the Dragon.

"I got it from watching you. I'm an Ice Element Dragon after all. Learning new Ice spells wasn't all that hard once I saw them a few times. I can do Ice Bolt now too." The Dragon

laughs with pride at her abilities clear in her tone, calling forth dozens of icy Spears to hurl down into the Ogres.

She's got pretty impressive spell damage, doing every bit as much as Mythryll. That she can do so much as a Lesser Dragon shocks Cain, though it really shouldn't. Common knowledge tells everyone that Dragons are immensely powerful beings.

Between the circling Dragons and the army charging through them on the ground, the Ice defenders, mostly the weak, inexperienced or shunned members of the army that were forced to remain behind, never even got a chance to mount a proper defense before being annihilated.

"Laura, sweep the city for stragglers, let's make sure everyone is safe and then we can get the Trolls settled back in." Cain instructs, before Laura banks into a sweeping turn that takes them around the perimeter of the city. There's not much to see, the locals had the situation pretty well in hand before they arrived, leaving no Ogre presence in the city now that they've cleared out the barracks area.

They head back to where the commanders have gathered, following the Troll King to a large stone building in a mostly demolished state that Cain suspects was the palace.

The moment the King sits upon his ruined throne, everyone present gets a set of notifications.

[Quest Complete: Troll Capital retaken]

[Guild Title Gained: Friend of Trolls]

[Eastern Troll Kingdom Saved]

[Level Up]

[Level Up]

[Cain has Received Spell Book: Appointed Companion] Rank S. [Passive] Puppet Master Exclusive. Allows one party member to benefit from all skills and abilities applicable to the user's summons.

Drop notifications are turned to private, so nobody else knows he's gotten this book, and Cain doesn't know if anyone else has gotten anything of similar quality, but the look on a lot of faces suggests they did.

"That was a good quest. Everyone remember the rules, keep your drops to yourself and don't fight." Cain hears Ghaz Senior shouting at his Guild. The Elven Army looks pleasantly shocked, so at least one of those quests must have applied to them too.

Such an event calls for a feast, and they know just where to start. Cain sends Laura to recover the freshly roasted meat in the Ogre camp while the rest of the city starts to celebrate. The Troll capital doesn't look like much, most of the buildings being dome shaped dwellings built of mud and clay, and the streets mismatched rocks pounded smooth with use, but it is much cleaner than it looks. The buildings look crude, but they seem to be some sort of unpainted Adobe, and are solid to the touch, not muddy as they appear. The grass areas are well tended and the shops sell a wide variety of foods, though very little in the way of equipment, except crude looking enchanted trinkets, like the Trolls wear as ornaments.

Cain is forced to reassess his view of Troll culture. They're not filthy creatures as he thought, it's just their esthetic.

The party runs well into the night, and by daybreak Cain starts hearing heavy feet thumping in a rhythmic pace coming towards the city. Laura flies up, spoiling for another fight, but returns with a disappointed smile.

"It's the Trolls. The big ones are coming back to the city. My best guess is nearly three thousand of them." She explains once she hands.

That's great news, the capital will have defenders. The next thing Cain plans is to Summon Dwarven Earth Mages to Reinforce the city walls. They were little more than earth mounds to begin with, a far cry from the impressive stone walls of the Elven cities or even the sturdy wooden ones around villages they've passed. All he needs to do is ask the King for permission.

That turns out to be unnecessary though, as the King himself comes looking for them.. He has seen the defensive abilities of the Fae villages, including the hastily built fort atop the plateau, and after losing his capital city, he's ready to upgrade the city defenses past the historic design.

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

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For the next three days, Cain sends out Dwarven Earth Mages as his Supporters, to help with the city wall rebuild. They've got a most excellent spell that can turn loose Soil into solid rock. So the plan is to have the Trolls dig a nice deep moat around the city, building up the walls and then have the Earth Mages smooth it out and turn the wall to stone.

Having a moat and the now necessary bridges to access the city is a huge win in the eyes of the Trolls. They never were skilled at construction, but they've always had a fondness for bridges of all sorts. The reinforced wall is just a bonus to them. Ten meters tall and thick with smooth outer sides the new wall is a formidable barrier. The deep moat connects to the nearby river from two spots, giving them a ring of slow moving water as a defense as well as emergency water supply for the city.

When the wall was done and the new bridges complete, the Troll city held a competition and celebration. At first the Guilds thought it would be a combat contest of some sort, but the Trolls believe heavily in luck. As such, they held a rock paper scissors competition to determine who the daytime guards would be.

In any other city, this would be a non event, but the daytime guards are stationed at the far end of the city's three entry bridges, in a guard house that is built into the footing of the bridge itself. For their entire term, they get to stay in the most prestigious real estate in the city, according to bridge Trolls, the hut under the bridge.

Watching their antics is hilarious, Bridge Trolls have strong magic, and no qualms about using trickery and illusion to try to win a spot for themselves to stay. Guard duty even pays well in the capital, as they get to keep half of the copper coin Bridge crossing fees they collect from travelers.

In the end, the winners are two strong magicians and one matronly bridge Troll with incredible luck. She had her four daughters cheering her on the whole time and never missed a single win in the best of five competitions. It didn't look like she used any magic of her own, but there was nothing the others could do to shake her. The perfect gate guard.

The Elven Army has helped prepare the feast for today, as the Ogres took most of the city's stores with them when they sent the armies out, and the foodies of the two Guilds are in culinary heaven. Even the roast meat loving Laura has changed to Dragon Pixie form to better enjoy the wide variety of fruit, nut and vegetable based dishes the Elves have cooked up. Currently she's on a hunt with Kone and Elmira for a rumored caramel walnut cake.

Gillian, the matriarch of the Yellow Tusk Guild is with Cain, planning out their next move over coffee and sandwiches. The scouts they sent out still haven't found any significant Ogre presence in the area, and no signs of them using dungeons as hiding places, so their first thought it so go visit the level 100 exit city. There's clearly something strange going on there, and they hope to fix it if they can.

The main force of both Guilds is now over level 90, so they're going to have to expand out of the valley soon. Cain's Darklight Host is a bit short on low leveled members though, and he doesn't want to abandon the Guild Houses, so plans are being made for someone to go back and find a new generation of crafters and fighters to fill the spots left by departing members once this mission is complete.

Meanwhile, the first to hit level 100, most likely Cain and Kone, will be the guinea pigs, testing to see if higher levels can actually return to the starting areas, or if they're locked out to protect the newbies. People come and go from beyond the valley in the south where the Orcs are, but they're also mostly well under level 100, either merchants without a system and their guards, or youths from beyond the valley looking to level up in the Orcs homeland.

The south side of the valley, which Cain and his Guild haven't had a chance to visit, is almost entirely under control of the Orcs, and holds a full variety of dungeons to train up to around level 80. That's where most residents of the valley stop, being strong enough to handle anything they see locally. It's also the point when the visiting warriors head home, and the ambitious Orcs follow, now high enough level to fight in the easiest of dungeons and wilderness areas beyond the south side of the valley.

Gillian herself was about to make the journey, later than most, but she was waiting for her son to level up and join her, and her daughter to pick a husband. Both essential motherly tasks are now complete. Well, Morgan isn't actually married yet, but she's definitely picked her desired husband.

The final plan is a simple one, they're going to split their forces. Cain, Kone, Sylvia the Elven General and a small group of her elite fighters will all go visit the Exit City. The others will accompany the Yellow Tusk Guild in stopping the Ogres from returning and retaking any Troll villages they can. There's still a quest ongoing from the Sunnybrook Alliance to defend the area, and it gives good experience.

The remainder of the Elven Field Army will remain here under the command of a Colonel named Cloverleaf and defend the Troll capital as they were ordered, should they happen to retake the city.

The group of elite fighters Sylvia picks is smaller than expected at only two people. A hunter named Luke, who specializes in tracking, and a very small mage named Misaki. Seriously, even for an Elf this girl is tiny. Cain almost thought it was a small child at first, but Kone was soundly rebuked when she thought she'd gained a little sister for the journey.

Misaki is also a transfer who used the random character creation. She got a Half Elf as her species, and random rolled a second time to get the other half of her lineage, still not having realized the true evil of the character creation system. She rolled Half Dryad. As Cain knows very well, a full blooded dryad is only waist tall, he used Dark Dryads as lesser Golems for a long time. When the dryads want to be bigger they have an innate ability to merge with a tree, using its trunk and limbs as additional body mass, an ability his Lesser Golems and Misaki both failed to inherit.

So despite her meter tall size, Misaki is a forty year old transfer, counting from the day she arrived, and almost fully grown. Her body was that of a youth when she arrived, and

both species take between 70 and 90 total years to reach full maturity, being stuck in a very long version of the mid to late teenage years.

The next morning the two Guilds gather to say their goodbyes and split into separate forces, so they don't miss any hiding Ogres. They'll be traveling near each other as they patrol, so no group will be out of range of the rest should they actually find an Ogre army, for safety's sake. They haven't lost anyone so far this mission and they don't plan to start.

Char comes over with a gift for Cain before they leave. She found some Shaman based skill books in the Troll capital. Most only had one copy that she used to expand her repertoire, but there was a duplicate of [Voodoo Doll] that creates a Puppet from nearby materials and curses a specified target when damaged. It's an F ranked skill, and the dolls are just that, unmoving dolls, but Cain is happy to have it anyhow.

The Puppet master finally has a skill that creates actual puppets and not Golems or other lively summons.

Misha and Dimnys explain that they've decided to be in charge of recruitment for the Guild, finding replacement members for those about to level out of the area. Each of them will take a Guild House and focus on their Crafting, giving them more than enough time before they get the last few levels. The unspoken bit is that they might not ever want to, instead living out their extended lifespan in peace making gear and clothing while heading up a local chapter of the Guild.

Being over level 90 and fully grown, their bodies age will reset to its last birthday, or anniversary of their arrival for Misha who is an actual transfer, a lot of times before they have to start worrying about getting older. But Cain's trying not to think too much into that. After all, he can always come back and visit, even if he gets a few hundred levels ahead.

Plus, he's got extra copies of the Guild House transfer circles in the Guild Bank, should he find a good spot in the higher level areas to set up a new branch of the Darklight Host.

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

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Cain's small team sets out right after the goodbyes are said, while the rest of the Guilds are still socializing and getting to know their teammates. Without any credible leads of Ogres in the area they're in no big rush, and it's more important to them to balance

members skills for optimal group efficiency than to rush out in a blind search for something to kill.

The Quest they were given was to stabilize the region around the Troll capital, and it looks like that is already mostly done. Once they clear out a few more occupied villages they'll most likely get the quest achievement.

The forests and swamps of the Troll Kingdom are unusually quiet, any wild animals either hiding, or hunted to extinction by ravenous Ogre armies. The war went on for years, and this region wasn't ever capable of supporting so many.

The first night, Cain and his party come across a dungeon just before sunset. The first they've personally seen in the Troll Kingdom. Hoping that it will be as more pleasant place to sleep than the swamp they're currently traversing, they decide to enter, Vala in the lead with Cain right behind, carrying Laura in her Pixie form on his shoulders.

The first thing they see are spiders, spiders everywhere. Not even half humanoid arachnid fae, just webs and overgrown spiders everywhere. Fortunately, today they've brought a fire mage with them. Misaki is more than happy to set every spider web she can find on fire. So happy in fact that they end up needing to have Laura chill the area around them to avoid roasting as the area goes up in flames.

The screams of arachnids continue for a few minutes, fading into the distance, before the group gets a notification.

[Bosses Defeated 1/2]

What level was this dungeon again? Misaki said she used an ability called [Hungry Fire] that spreads, doing damage over time to anything near a burning target and lighting them on fire too, but a single skill shouldn't kill a boss.

They walk carefully through the ash until they get to the boss room, finding nothing but smoke and a smoldering corpse. Looks like the fire really did get to it.

Shocked by this outcome, they all take a much closer look at the enemies beyond the boss room. Spiders again, but mostly hidden in traps, pits and loose sand. They're mostly level 34 and 35. The dungeon they've entered is ridiculously far below their level.

With that in mind, Cain sends the Lamia Scourge Casters he's using a Lesser Golems forward with orders to kill everything. They're fast and agile, plus easily able to enter the hiding places of the spiders with their snake like bodies.

[Bosses Defeated 2/2]

Well, that was easy, and now they've got a place to rest.

"Start looking for somewhere comfortable to sleep. The Golems should have cleared out everything from the dungeon, so just pick somewhere that looks comfortable." Cain smiles at the group, happy to be out of the swamp for the night.

"How long do we have until the dungeon resets?" Luke, the Ranger that Sylvia picked to accompany them asks, having never stayed an extended time in a completed dungeon.

"24 hours after the final boss dies, or 48 hours total if you don't finish the dungeon." Kone explains, riding atop her giant Lynx while she looks for a good spot.

"There's a nice sandy area just behind us a ways, that should be plenty soft to sleep on if we've got blankets to keep the sand out." Sylvia suggests.

"I've got a bunch of rugs and ground sheets, since I usually bring a large tent for the Guild. The sand should be perfect. Do you have a long lasting campfire spell Misaki? The dungeons tend to get very, very dark at times." Cain asks.

Every transfer carries a torch or light of some sort for just that reason. Cain never really thought about it before, because either Misha or one of the Summoned Clerics would take care of the light spell on their own, but today he didn't have any with him, having brought more clones of Kone instead, who gets night vision but not a light spell.

Currently the dungeon has a mild light, as if nearing twilight, bright enough for comfortable travel, but low enough to help the spiders hide. But that is liable to change without notice.

Once they get to the sandy area, Misaki sets up a campfire spell that is supposed to last for 8 hours and Cain sets out a collection of sheets and cushions on the ground for comfort. The Golems have set up a perimeter around them, and Nemu is getting comfortable by the fire with a lute and pan flute. While everyone else picks their spot, she starts playing relaxing music, making Luke chuckle.

"Has anyone ever told you that you live an enviously good life? Summons to do the fighting, more to rub your back when you're tired, another pair to play you gentle music to lull you to sleep. You didn't roll a class, you rolled a lifestyle." The Ranger gives an envious laugh.

"He's got it pretty good for sure. Though he has a hard time traveling with other guys, the jealousy gets to them." Kone laughs, resting her head against her Lynx.

"Oh, you startled me, I totally forgot you weren't a Summon." Sylvia laughs, looking over at the Druid.

"Yeah, the half dozen clones of you keep making me forget that there's a real person version of you here too." Misaki agrees and Cain hugs the little Druid to keep her from pouting.

"Don't worry, I always know where the real you is." Cain assures her with a smile, making Luke chuckle.

"And to top it all off, there's Dragons. How is that in any way fair?" Misaki laughs as Laura transforms into her Dragon body and stretches out on the cool sand.

"That's actually the result of an S ranked ancient skill book. Class exclusive, but it gives me the companions. Vala, Nemu and Laura. There might be another one possible, but I haven't come across it yet." Cain shrugs.

"No wonder you're on such a different level, S Rank skills have some crazy abilities." Sylvia agrees.

Best to let her think everything strange is from the ability that creates the companions, giving out more details about his overpowered class will just breed envy for no good reason.

When morning comes they start heading for the exit to the valley. Without anything slowing them down it's been a very short journey that they'll likely finish this afternoon.

There's still no signs of the Ogres, which seems a bit odd, but maybe they've all moved toward the southern borders where all the other armies of the alliance will be pushing up against their borders. Nobody intends to wipe them out entirely, it wouldn't be good for the power balance in the valley, but they took a fair bit of extra land during the war with the Trolls, and the Alliance intends to push them back north to their old Kingdom boundaries.

Cain and Sylvia both hope they're having as smooth of a time as the Troll Capital fight. The sooner things get settled again the sooner small villages can stop living in fear of Ogre Raids. They might have focused on big cities like Sunnybrook, but that didn't mean they left the villagers alone.

Laura has taken her Dragon Pixie form to stay incognito, and Nemu is in her cloth outfit that looks like a belly dancer's costume. Vala can't really change to an unassuming outfit, so she's playing the role of their guard while all the others are in casual looking outfits as if they were merchant travelers and not a hardcore dungeon team. A small deception intended to mislead anyone who might be thinking of robbing them or in the wilderness.

Bandits aren't exactly unheard of, though this far out into Ogre territory they seem much less likely, even if they're near the exit city.

Just after noon, the barrier Ridgeline that marks the edge of the beginner's valley comes into sight, and a half hour after that they can see the city in the gap between the mountains. It looks nearly modern to Cain's eyes. Tall stone and brick buildings with an

architectural style reminiscent of the early twentieth century. They decide to sit down and eat before approaching, in case there's trouble.

"Who are we kidding, of course there's trouble, there's always trouble." Cain teases Kone when she suggests they might just be antisocial.

"I'm just saying, maybe they don't like visitors and that's why they don't let travelers through." The Druid shrugs. Luke has noticed something more sinister though. They're being tracked. Whoever is out there isn't getting closer like they're going to attack, more like they're making sure the group keeps going towards the city.

He signals to the group that they're being herded and everyone gets ready for things to get really ugly when they reach the city.

So much for the chances of them just being antisocial.

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

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Luke keeps his tracking skills active as they approach the city, giving updates in party chat using the interface so that he's not overheard. They're keeping their distance, but have defined moved into a position that will prevent turning way without a fight.

A rough looking bunch of about twenty adventurers comes out of the gates when they're a few hundred meters away, all with the same [Montauk Guardians] Guild tag above their names when Cain turns status bars on in his interface. Best to just leave that active at this point, the little annoyances of the overlay is well with the information it provides in a new situation.

"Well, aren't you kind. You two gentlemen brought us all these pretty women at one time. Tell you what, leave your old Guilds now and we'll write you up a real sweet contract to join us. There's no need to be mean to generous lads such as yourselves." The leader of their welcoming committee, a Paladin named IR1337FoEva420 announces in a smarmy sneer.

"He needs to die just for that gamer tag." Cain sends in Group chat, making Luke laugh and Sylvia give him a confused look. He guesses she's not familiar with the slang.

Cain decides that surprise is likely the best tactic, so he selects the option to accept all player attacks on Guild members as a Guild War declaration, a little loophole that will prevent him from being flagged as an aggressor if he attacks one of their members in town. Normally Guild War declarations must be sent and accepted. But attacking a guild leader can be directly accepted by them without a formal declaration.

In the beginner valley, this just means that people let Guild Masters or their party members attack first, to avoid an actual Guild War. But Cain suspects these guys are too arrogant to notice he is the leader of the Darklight Host.

The trap set, he has Laura transform back into a Dragon and leap into the air to get a good angle to freeze the area. The shock tactic works perfectly, a startled archer fires a glancing shot off her scales the moment she appears.

[Montauk Guardians] have declared war on [Darklight Host] declaration will last 24 hours, criminal aggressor flags do not apply during a Guild War.

Cain smiles at the notification, while the welcoming committee looks stunned, not understanding what just happened. They attacked a Dragon didn't they?

Laura layers breath all over the area, and the trees behind them, covering all the hostile forces in a thick Ice Fog. Cain calls forth all his summons at that moment, into the welcoming committee, while the Vala twins split. One goes forward, One turns to rush behind them, to spread Pestilence among the group following them.

Other than the Paladin, no other healers are visible, so Cain holds off a few seconds, letting Might Of Many stack up. All of the forces in front have formed into a tight circle, to avoid being surrounded, but that will be their doom. The Plague Mages Summoned by Cain's Lesser Sorcerer ability have placed corrosive puddles under their feet, and Cain has cast Acid Rain over the area, drenching them all in damage over time effects, even before Pestilence behind to take its toll.

They've now realized their mistake, and Cain can see a few blank looks that are clearly calling for aid in the interface, but the damage is so much more than they can heal that nobody will make it in time. Even if they were standing at the gate right now it would be hopeless.

The rhythmic thumping of running boots on cobblestone streets is getting louder, the reinforcements are almost here.

"Do not attack them, just avoid getting hit or flagged as a criminal. We have this in hand." Cain informs his other group members. They could attack the ones already here without issue, they're all in combat with a party member. But anyone showing up afterwards might be a different story until they're definitely in combat. No need to cause troubles for the Elven kingdoms.

Cain is holding off on the direct attacks, letting the Paladin struggle to keep the group alive while everyone drinks healing potions as fast as they can. It's been nearly 30 seconds now, and his buff is as big as it will get, so Cain takes aim at the fighters just reaching the gate.

They've sent two Holy Clerics, which is an advanced cleric class and three Paladins as the first wave, and Cain lets loose a Lightning Arrow into the group, killing them all in a single shot. They were weaker than Cain expected, or perhaps that's normal when his summons are fighting twenty targets.

As they fall, scorched and blackened, dozens more fill the massive doorway with weapons drawn. Anyone with a Montauk Guardians membership is fair game, so Cain lets loose with multi shots of Lightning Arrows, ripping through their ranks.

He can see that a party or Guild quest announcement has arrived and been accepted by Kone while he was busy, so Cain waits for the Druid to let him know what it says.

"Kill everything hostile and free the captured workers from the city." She summarizes for him, making Laura laugh and release Dragon breath in the city.

There's a few other Guilds who have attacked her, receiving instant declarations in return. They've all got strange names though.

[Montauk Guardians Team 2] has declared war on [Darklight Host]

[Montauk Guardians Team 3] has declared war on [Darklight Host]

[Montauk Guardians Team 4] has declared war on [Darklight Host]

Did they run out of spots and create subordinate Guilds so they could have more than the maximum 100 members? Hopefully none of them are insanely strong, since this is the closest city to the Beginner Valley. From what Cain has seen so far, level 110 is the high end for the fighters they've sent out to meet him. Ten levels is a manageable difference as far as Cain is concerned.

[Pestilence] has become a nightmare for the city. The Guilds are forming Raid teams to attack, not knowing that it's one squad, not an entire Guild attacking them. But that just increases the valid targets for the debuff to spread, and Shamans are in short supply. Druids, who can cast an area cleanse, are exceedingly rare, and only a few are in the city, but both have played dumb, not responding to messages and hiding as if they were occupied or asleep.

The Guild took over an entire quadrant of the city, and now that they're forming up to attack, they're much too close together to escape. The Shamans get everyone further apart to stop the spread of Pestilence, but not before every Healer has had their mana pool depleted, leaving many fighters injured. Darklight Host and Yellow Tusk both have

plenty of healers in their Guilds, but when looking at the larger picture, over an entire city, the classes that can heal make up less than 5 percent of people with a system.

When everyone gets damaged at once, by Dragons and Pestilence Debuffs for example, there's just not enough to go around.

They've stopped trying to leave the city to attack now, so Cain is going in. Vala has returned from behind them, signaling that the scouts are all dead, and Nemu is playing a jaunty tune that is doing an incredible job of demoralizing their enemies. The Wrath Bringers and Snapping Turtles are going berserk inside the gates, the shared healing from Vala is making it difficult to take them down, and the panic from the number of wounded is keeping the Montauk Guardians from effectively focusing down a single target.

The Dread Spider Bodyguards are usually pretty quiet during a fight, but today they're doing overtime, spreading webs to keep targets in damaging spell effects, or attacking hidden enemies with Poisoned Spears, bringing them out into the open in the vain hope of healing.

While their Guild members would presumably love to, they're already low on mana and struggling. Though some members are noticeably being ignored, this must not be a tight knit Guild.

The injured members soon realize they've been betrayed and abandoned, every class capable of healing that they see has a Guild Deserter tag and is running for the far side of the city, away from the attacks.

Before today, nobody would dare. Betraying the Guild is a fate worse than death in this city, worse even than the fate they give the transfers forced into slave contracts, and many of them already beg for death.

For decades the Montauk Guardians have ruled this area with an iron fist. Capturing and forcing into lifelong servitude contracts every transfer that levels out of the Valley and appears here. The system prevents them from breaking the carefully worded contracts they're forced to sign, so the unfortunate souls can't even try to flee the city and risk their lives against Retribution and roaming monsters.

But that's all come crashing down today. The Guilds are in shambles, dozens are dead and many survivors have left the Guild and fled. AllNatty the Guild Master is in a rage, he was just awoken from a particularly enjoyable night to deal with an attack on the Guild. He doesn't know which idiot declared war on this upstart Darklight Host, but the score shown is 67-0 in their favor, and reports say that the subordinate Guilds are in the same situation.

There is no point in hiding, his rule over this city has been questioned and he will never accept that. But the thought lingers in his mind, who could be strong enough to go

against an entire town? Are they not from the valley, but actually a high level Guild that was passing by and got offended by his scouts? If anyone involved in this mess survives the day, he intends to kill them himself. After forcing them to turn over everything they have, of course.

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

Chapter 135 - 135

AllNatty starts scanning through the chat logs looking for clues as to what they're up against. The answer seems to be a lot of demons, bears, Turtles and a pair of Dragons with a few hunters and Druids near the gates.

It's the Dragons that truly concern him. In his mind that means Dragon Riders, not Hunters are with the Druids outside. That's a second advancement class, not usually available until level 200, assuming you started as an advanced class and didn't try to upgrade at level 100 so you could build up the basic requirements. Though the Dragons might be Druids themselves, some scaly Beastkin can transform into Dragon types. If they can fly they've got a lot of points into their transformation though, so they're not going to be pushovers.

He looks to see who started this whole mess and sees the declaration was made by that idiot Eva, formally known as IR1337FOEVA420, the head of his rookie capture team. Or former head, as the Guild log shows his death. Checking deeper, he finds that those idiots attacked a Guild Master who had auto accept War Declarations turned on.

They should know better, but now it's up to him to save his Guild and Town from being annihilated.

He's no slouch in combat, being level 137, mostly because he often makes his members carry him through dungeons even even he's asleep, steadily grinding more levels to maintain his power.

After decades of ruling Montauk, or Exit City as most people call it, there's no way he can back down now. His Guild has forced hundreds of transfers into slave contracts, if they think there's a chance the Guild will fall they will rebel. If every member of the guild dies without anyone to transfer the contract to the system will nullify their contracts and the conditions imposed upon them.

The biggest threat seems to be the Dragons, which means killing the Dragon Riders, if that's what they are. A class ability lets them resurrect their mounts as if they were Summoned Beasts.

Next up will be to find the Demon Specialist warlock that is calling forth all the Wrath Bringers. That's not going to be easy either, as surely the warlock will call his pets back to defend him. The smaller demons are not a huge threat, though they've helped kill a lot of his Guild members, but the big ones have to go. They have the strength to breach buildings, smashing in walls of Guild Houses to let the others loose inside.

[Montauk Guardians Team 4] has disbanded

Oh no, AllNatty realizes he's spent too long planning, one of the subordinate Guilds has been entirely eliminated. But their Guild House is just down the block from his own residence, so the team that finished them off should still be there.

He rushes outside, gathering his personal Bodyguards as he goes, and heads for the Team 4 house. There's Wrath Bringers outside, and the sound of destruction inside. What are they doing? Are they taking time to loot the place as they go?

The pure arrogance of such an act startles the Tyrant. Even he loots after the battle is done.

Moments later a woman who the system identifies as an Epic Demon appears, followed by two snake like lesser demons dragging large sacks. That must be the Warlock, using a Demon transformation. The system interface shows her to be significantly below his level, 20 levels or more, so the enraged Guild Master orders his pair of Bodyguards forward.

"Kill the Warlock and recover our treasures. You can split it between you if the Warlock dies." He announces and the two Berserkers cheer. The Berserker class, as many others do, has the option to advance into a new skill tree without changing class names, gaining huge damage buffs and an aura that demoralizes enemies. Mostly only transfers that never got a unique skill that unlocked an advanced class will choose that option though.

Confident in their abilities both charge into combat, being met with the Axes and shields of the Wrath Bringers. That's something off about these Demons, they're much stronger than their level says they should be. But the Bodyguards don't have time to warn their Guild Master before he's charged the smiling Warlock with the huge two handed sword.

That in itself should have warned them they'd made a mistake. Two handed melee weapon for a spell Caster? Unheard of.

Vala easily meets the arrogant fighter in combat and smiles. He's got some decent self healing, but it's no match for Pestilence. Plus, he's slower than she is. What exactly did

he think an Epic Demon was capable of? Alone, Vala is no weaker than any dungeon boss her level, and she receives even more damage reduction, durability and damage done from the fact she's Cain's Companion.

Now, a dungeon boss in the late 90s level range is no match for the level 137 Guild Master alone, but with her speed and Pestilence, Vala has him fully occupied and the Lesser Demons are just about in position.

Vala wasn't traveling in a small group, the summons were split between the twins, and went searching door to door for hiding Guild Members. Once the battle started, they began coming back out. Lesser Demon Army tripled their numbers, leaving each twin with a dozen Wrath Bringers and thirty Lamia, plus a clone of Kone and accompanying Turtles and Bears under their command. The rest of the summons, plus Nemu have stayed back with Cain on defense.

Except Laura that is. The Dragon and her sister, as she has decided her clone should be called, are randomly laying Dragon Breath all over the city, terrifying the locals, and convincing many of the captured transfers to risk everything to attack any Guild Members caught in the fog. Almost all of the healers are dead or have defected and fled now, and the fog only damages hostile targets. To everyone else, it's just cold and hard to see.

[Montauk Guardians Team 1] has been disbanded

AllNatty howls in rage, that's two of his sub Guilds that have been totally annihilated already.

The anguished gesture actually saves his life, as it gives him the chance to see the incoming axe of a Wrath Bringer. He's about to berate his Bodyguards for losing aggro, but noticed that they're being overwhelmed. Not only are they facing two Wrath Bringers and a couple Lamia, there are ten or more huge demons here now and dozens of the snake women.

He tries to flee, to get somewhere he can rally his forces, but the spinning blade wielded by Vala has got him in the back foot with nowhere to go. An axe slams into his back, knocking him to his knees and with a sharp pain in his head, the world goes dark.

Vala looks down on her kill, impressed that even with the effects of Pestilence he could still hold his own until the Wrath Bringers showed up. In honor of his efforts, she cleanly removes his head and mounts it to the decorative gold gate of a nearby Guild House. There, that should just everyone know that he was worthy of recognition.

The city seems to be in an uproar now, they're fighting everywhere they go, but Vala steadily leads her force onwards, killing any enemy Guild member she finds. The city doesn't seem to have guards, only members of the sub Guilds. Even those are getting hard to find. There are bodies everywhere, people in slave collars fighting not just Guild

members, but random citizens for reasons unknown to the inquisitive Demon. Perhaps the oppressed are eliminating the informants and allies of the Guild that enslaved them?

Not really her problem, none of those people are flagged as at war with her.

Outside the gates, Cain has captured a number of the fleeing former Guild members. They're still combatants until their deserter tag wears off, though they can freely fight against their former Guild now as well.

"Tell me, what was going on in this city? Answer or we'll raze it to the ground and kill everything that moves." Cain demands of the captured group in a cold voice.

At this point they're terrified. The gentle looking Felian with him is a savage. So fast that they couldn't even try to flee once they were seen. The furry monsters simply grabbed them, tied them up and brought them here.

"Guild Master AllNatty rules this place with an iron fist. He captures every transfer that is transported into the city and forces them into a contract. It's a tricky thing that uses the system rules and an enchanted collar to prevent them from leaving the city. If they do, the system triggers the collar and it kills them." A War Cleric informs him.

"If you do well enough, and convince the Guild that you're loyal and trustworthy, they'll make you a Guild Member and remove the collar so you can do dungeons outside. But the contract still has all your loot drop in the Guild Bank, so you'll never advance except in level. Only Officers can remove items from their sub Guilds bank." A Holy Cleric agrees.

"So they thought you two were trustworthy to do their dirty work?" Cain asks the loaded question.

"No sir, just to heal in dungeons. Please don't kill me." The Clerics beg in unison while a captured Paladin looks at them in disgust. Most of these transfers look like they weren't against the system, they only fled because they didn't want to be on the losing side and expected the Guild to be annihilated.

Cain sees a handful who look repentant among them and orders the Snapping Turtles to drag them away.

"Kill the rest."

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

Chapter 136 - 136

The summons around Cain have just finished up the dirty work when he gets a stream of notifications.

[Guild Master AllNatty has died]

[Montauk Guardians] has been disbanded

[Montauk Guardians Team 2] has been disbanded

[Montauk Guardians Team 3] has been disbanded

[Guild War Has Ended]

[Calculating War Totals]

[Flawless Victory 500-0]

[Darklight Host is Victorious]

The last four are Zone Announcements that everyone with a system near the city can see, making Sylvia and the others gasp in horror. The sounds from inside the city are a mix of amazement, horror, and cheers of victory from the transfers now freed from their contracts.

Cain looks at the Guild interface to see what they've been awarded. Five Guild Houses, the contents of the Guild banks, a bunch of gear that Vala seems to have looted and one pending calculation.

[Processing total gains to calculate bonus experience]

[2 members participating] please wait.

Well, this should be interesting. Cain hasn't really been part of wide scale Guild combat, preferring not to start fights in the outside world where possible. Things just got a bit out of hand today when the whole city declared war on him before he knew what was happening.

The entire population of this place can't be more than about five thousand people, including the civilians with no interface. If they killed 500 Guild members, plus an unknown number of non Guilded allies who might have joined in the fight, there can't be all that many transfers left, unless every transfer who arrived in the last decade is still here.

That actually turns out to be not far from the truth, as transfers in Iron collars start crowding towards the city gates, hoping to catch a glimpse of their saviors Cain assumes.

[847 Contracts may be transferred: Accept or Nullify]

The captured workers contracts are transferable? Just how evil was this Guild Master? Cain selects nullify, as he really doesn't intend on taking over this city, and the collars begin falling to the ground with a metallic ring. A roar of victory sounds all over the city, echoing off the walls as if the city itself was shouting.

An old man that Cain's interface identifies as the former mayor of Montauk City comes forward with a large object in his hands. It looks to be a huge key on a pillow. The ceremonial key to the city perhaps?

"Welcome to Montauk. My name is Steve, the former mayor of the city, before AllNatty and his Guardians deposed me and took over the city. I do hope your intentions are honorable, though you do have the right to take his place." The mayor begins as the crowds part and the two teams led by Vala appear, walking over to stand behind Cain and the party.

His eyes widen at the army of demons and the pair of shimmering white Dragons, but he continues anyways, seeing that Cain is the Guild Master.

"As I was saying, the city is yours for the taking, if you so choose."

[Quest: Capture or Free Montauk] quest reward based on decision.

"The city is free Mayor. We only came here to see why nobody ever returned to Beginners Valley, and why no news or goods ever traveled anymore." Cain explains.

"News rarely traveled before they arrived, anyone over level 100 must complete a Mentor quest to return through the mountains, that limits their power inside the valley and requires a lot of hours helping others advance. Not many are willing to do it, so only secondhand news passes through to the new arrivals." The mayor slowly explains, his age and poor health getting to him.

Seeing the shape he's in, Kone casts the full array of healing abilities she knows, to cleanse, heal and refresh the elderly mayor, who immediately begins to look much more healthy.

"Thank you for that. The Guild had Forbidden the healers to help me, worried that I would start a rebellion if I could." The old man bows to the Druid.

"Tonight we celebrate!" Comes a cheer from inside the walls and the old man smiles.

"Welcome to Montauk, let me show you to your new home here. It passed to your control when you won the Guild War." The mayor leads them through bloodstained streets, littered with bodies. There are far more than five hundred dead if this density is anything to go by, but they are near where the fighting started, so maybe the other side of the city is better.

They are led to a large white plantation style house with a stone wall and solid Gold gates with a man's head impaled upon them.

"Welcome to the former home of the Montauk Guardians Guild. If I'm not mistaken, that head belongs to the former Guild Master, the level 137 AllNatty." The mayor swings the gate open with a grand gesture, making the head sway on its spike.

"Hey, I remember that guy, excellent fighter. It took me plus two Wrath Bringers to take him down." Vala announces with a hint of admiration for his skills.

The mayor looks impressed, the Guild Master had always seemed an invincible presence here in the city. Even when ambushed ten on one he barely took a scratch. But in the end, it was the excessive self healing gained by Vala from the [Pestilence] skill that changed the balance. He couldn't kill her through the healing, and couldn't escape her speed. Seeing his head on the gate now, he doesn't look so fearsome as his presence made him seem to the Mayor and townsfolk.

The inside of the Guild House is extremely luxurious, as expected of a Tyrant. Cain looks around for a good spot to sit before leading the mayor to a set of couches.

"Can the city defend itself? Or should we have someone sent over to work as guards until we can be sure nobody will try to take his place." Cain asks.

"With the contracts gone, we should be fine. The transfers were overwhelmed individually when they arrived, and forced into the contract and enchanted collars. Free of them, we should have a sufficient force of reliable warriors. I tried to keep in contact with as many good people as I could over the years." The mayor nods his head as he thinks.

"Do you think a meeting in the city Square would be enough to get your town guard assembled and start rebuilding? I saw a lot of dead shopkeepers and Guild members, plus we may have broken a few buildings during the battle." Cain asks.

"It should be enough to get things in order for a few days. Once the Guilds started falling, the transfers under contract started killing off all the informants and cronies that worked for them. It caused a lot of additional casualties all over the city, so even I don't know where things stand yet." The mayor explains.

It looks like they caused a bit more trouble than intended during their visit here. But at least it's taken care of.

[Calculation Complete: Bonus Experience Awarded]

[System Estimates required inactive time 30 minutes. Confirm to complete Quest]

30 minutes inactive to complete a quest? Does that mean him or the interface? Kone is looking at him with confusion, so it must have given her the same notice.

"How about we meet you at the town square in 4 hours? It will give us time to rest and refresh, and for the survivors to start getting things in order and the bodies out of the streets before holding the meeting?" Cain suggests.

The mayor agrees and heads out to get everything organized, before Cain turns to the Elves. "We have got a few quest notifications to deal with, the interface says it needs us inactive for 30 minutes for whatever reason, can you watch over us? I'm not sure if my summons will stay active."

"We got some notifications too, and more than two levels from the hidden quest. You had the Guild War on top of that, so it might have given you an even bigger bonus. I'll watch over you while you do whatever the system needs." Misaki agrees.

Cain and Kone get comfortable on the couch and select the option to complete the quests.

[Quest Complete: Hero of the Valley]

[Quest Complete: Free Montauk]

[Guild War Won: Ratio 500:0] error, beyond maximum bonus cannot be applied. Maximum modifier selected.

[Error: Maximum modifier altered above parameters by Class Skill] experience progression stopped by Class Option.

[Level Set to 100]

[Congratulations on Randomly Obtaining the Puppet Master Class. Please Select a Skill Tree to finalize new character creation]

This is definitely the new character creation screen, Cain can see the tabs at the top where he chose his name and random rolled his class. What in the world is going on here?

On the other end of the couch, Kone has it much easier. While she got the same set of notifications, it brought her to the advanced class selection screen.

[Please Choose a Class Option]

[Hidden Selection available due to obtained skill combination]

[Base Options] Druid: Forest Protector, Druid: Regenerist, Druid: Nature's Ally

[Hidden Option] Beast Lord

All the base options are progression paths within the Druid Class, which isn't too surprising, as it's already an advanced class and she likely didn't meet a requirement for any of the the third progression classes at level 100. But what exactly is a Beast Lord?

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

Chapter 137 - 137

Cain looks over the options he has in front of him. Lord or General. The two skills he saw available for level 100. From the tool tip he knows they're exclusive, he will have to finish one path before beginning the other, but there is still no solvable information about what these paths involve.

Lord shows a picture of him in elegant clothes, but with a ruthlessness in his posture and appearance that screams dominance and power.

General shows him in heavy armor, giving a Knightly impression with many blurred figures at his back.

"So that's the choice, power or numbers" Cain thinks out loud inside the character creation area, an old habit of his.

The numbers he has were enough to take a small city by surprise, mostly due to Lesser Demon Army and Summon Cloning. So he's leaning towards the Lord Option. If it increases the quality of his summons, or gives him Epic Golems, as the boss monsters were recorded, that would be the best path for him. At least in his opinion.

"Choose option Lord" He informs the interface with determination.

[Character Creation Complete]

[Class Skill Gained: Puppeteer] Requires INT 100. Animate dolls as puppets. Puppets are always one tenth of the Casters level. Limit 1 Puppet per character level.

[Lord Path Class Skill Gained: Merger] Requires CON and STR 100. A Puppet master can Merge with one or more of his Summons, or the summons may Merge with identical summons to increase their power.

[Lord Path Selected: 20 Skill Points Used] 80 Skill Points remaining.

Is that what stopped him during initial character creation? He didn't have the points to select an option? It says he used 20 but has 80 left, so he's been getting one every level, he just didn't have the option to use them because he was too low of a level to access the Class change screen.

After level 100, it supposedly can be accessed anytime until you choose an option. A small blessing for transfers who are very close to a requirement and want to hold off on the change.

[Knight] Rank achieved

[Skill Gained: Knightly Pride] Summons damage taken halved. Summons damage done doubled.

That's a pretty impressive first Skill for the Lord Path. With the ability to Merge with his summons to gain their power, Cain could be an absolute monster in combat if he should choose to. This is what he was hoping for right off the start, but it seems that he did so well on the random roll that he wasn't qualified for the very basics of the class it chose.

He's got points left, and it looks like there are 4 more ranks of the Lord Path left, so Cain drops twenty points into the next rank.

[Baron] Rank Achieved

[Skill Gained: Retinue] Bodyguard and Sorcerer type summons become Greater Golems.

Greater Dread Spiders, or other agility types as his Bodyguards and his choice of spell casting Greater Golems as his Sorcerers? Now he's getting into the really good stuff. With that improvement, his personal guard could now be just as mighty as his front line Wrath Bringers were this morning, more if you account for the bonuses granted at the Knight Rank.

No stopping now. On to the next, it's time to make this class truly overpowered.

[Earl] Rank Achieved

[Skill Gained: Personal Guard] Summon two Epic Golem type guards.

There it is, the ability to Summon dungeon bosses to aid him in combat. Not only that, but to buff them immensely. He doesn't know how he's going to break this to everyone else without getting lynched for cheating. The possibilities are endless though. They've faced so many cool and unique boss monsters so far, and they're all now possible to Summon.

The first that comes to mind was the Dark Elf boss that nearly Chopped his entire force to pieces. That guy was brutal. Or the Mage type Dark Elven Boss. Those Shadow attacks? That would be a great addition to their area attack power.

Cain briefly wonders if it's possible to lead others down this path to brokenness. There's a class help button in the creation menu, maybe it has information? About the class, yeah, that's not new, class esthetics, yeah he knows that. Oh there it is, how to obtain Puppet Master Class.

Random Roll: Limited

Progression Path: Not Available

Alternate Path: Hidden Skill combination will unlock [Quest: All The Puppets] at level 200 if Stat requirements are met.

Well, that's not much detail, but he now knows that it is possible for someone else to have gained this class without using the random character creator.

Time for another Upgrade.

[Marquis] Rank Achieved

[Glory of the Mark] All active [Class Skill] Summons may be upgraded by 1 Rank in quality.

What can Cain even say to that? He was daydreaming about the boss monsters he could Summon and how insane they would be, but the Marquis skill would theoretically make his Wrath Bringers every bit as fearsome.

That's 80 points in, so a transfer who got this class through the quest would reach this point at level 280 through sheer determination with no luck or saved Skill Points. No wonder they don't come anywhere near the starting zones if this is the sort of power level they're all working with at the higher levels.

One last Rank to go before Cain loses his nerve.

[Duke] Rank Achieved

[Advisors] Appoints all Companion type summons as Advisors. Advisors are Epic Quality Summons that gain the ability [Bonded Forces] allowing them to Summon 4 Greater Golem type Guardians from their racial category. If no Companion type Summons are known, grants 1 Random Companion. Bonded Forces do not benefit from [Glory of the Mark] but gain all other bonuses granted to the Puppet Master's Summons.

Laura is going to be stoked, she can become an Epic Dragon right away. Vala and Nemu are already Epic, so no change there, but having them control their own sets of Demon, Beastkin and Dragon type Golems will be an adventure on its own. Cain can only imagine what Nemu is going to pick for her Bonded Forces. He could likely force her to pick something specific, but as a Companion he thinks it's better if she's given some autonomy.

Plus, she is amazing at the pouting face to get what she wants anyhow.

Cain finishes looking over the options, making sure there is nothing he has missed. No, the Lord Skill tree is finished, and he can now select General, once he gets Twenty Skill Points that is. Maybe it's time to start using his [Appointed Companion] Skill too, granting Kone all the buffs and abilities applicable to his Companions. He can blame it on the level 100 change without raising any eyebrows about him getting another S Rank Skill book.

Plus, Kone has earned it, she follows him everywhere and is immensely helpful in every way she can.

The Spirit Folk Druid has become like a daughter to him, more of a family member than just a Guild member. Cain was sad that Misha chose to take on Guild Recruitment duty and return to Sunnybrook, but he would be devastated if he was separated from Kone for an extended period like that. He's far from ready to let her go her own way in life.

Meanwhile in the other side of the couch, the Druid in question was looking over her options. The Druid advancement is obvious. They're essentially the Tank, Healer and mixed options, of which she's currently on the mixed path. If that was all there was, it would be a simple choice.

But she finds herself looking at the Beast Lord Option, afraid to select it to look, in case it pulls the same 'no second chances' stunt that the character creation screens like to. The option is really appealing though. It looks regal, the picture makes her look like a proper lady. Plus, there's the shadowy forms of animals in the background, which makes her think it's a summoning class. Kone has been hiding a severe case of hero worship, wanting to be every bit as cool as Cain, standing at his side and not just as his most beloved sidekick.

This class option really, really looks like it might be the way to become more like him, but still maintain her own role so she doesn't become useless to him.

It's not long before the temptation becomes too much and she selects the Class Change option.

[Hidden Class Change: Beast Lord] initiated

[All Skills Reset]

Okay, that's definitely not normal. Selecting Advanced Classes at level 100 should add on to your existing skills. You gain more cool stuff, you don't start over from zero.

[Beast Lord Available Skills]

[Monstrous Regeneration] Grants Beast Lord and their [Companions] a Healing Aura. regenerates 5 percent of all Allies HP per second. [Cleanse] effect every 5 seconds.

[Lord's blessing] Greater Heal, recovers a large amount of targets HP.

[Bestial Allies] Summon 8 Beastkin type Greater Golems.

[Control Beasts] Beast and Beastkin type monsters in the area are under your control. Up to 10 may be actively controlled at once. Number of targets controlled scales with Beast Lords Level.

[Wild Nobility] Increase damage done by self and summons by 50 percent, reduce damage taken by 25 percent. Double all base stats.

[Wild Affinity] Summon Companion of a specified type. Choice is final once made. Gain benefit based on Summon Chosen.

[Existing Compatible Skills]

[Cleave]

[Critical Healing]

[Thorns of Retribution]

Kone does her best not to panic as she looks over the new skills. She kept a few existing skills, the ones from books. But everything else is reset. Only 6 class skills to work with at level 100? But they look pretty powerful, and Getting them all would use up all 100 Skill Points she has, so it must be intentional.

There is really only one option at this point. Kone puts all her points into her new skills and double checks her interface to see if anything is missing.. Now, to exit the menu and hope that Cain isn't too mad that she gave up most of her Healing abilities.

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

Chapter 138 - 138

When Kone exits the Class change menu she is faced with another dilemma, in the form of a notification.

[Wild Affinity] Requires Beast Lord Kone to choose a Companion. One time choice. Beast Lord will gain a bonus based on their Wild Affinity Companion.

But what should she pick? Something cool, since it grants a bonus. She gave up a lot of her healing abilities, so maybe something that can heal? What is powerful and can heal?

Well, there's a few things, starting with the Forest Dragons. Wouldn't that be awesome?

[Selection Made: Summoning Companion]

Wait, no, It was just a thought. But then Laura is a Companion too isn't she? So it might really be possible.

A Dragon slightly smaller than Laura, with green and brown mottled scales starts to take shape and everyone in the room gasps in shock except Cain, who is still busy in his interface. As it forms, it becomes clear that this Dragons scales aren't hard like the Opal Prismatic Dragon that is Laura, instead they're soft and flexible like leaves, giving the Dragon a soft and shaggy appearance like it was wearing a ghillie suit.

"Hi, I'm Kone." She greets the Dragon, at a loss for words.

"You can call me Su." A gentle voice responds and the Dragon extends its neck forward to rub cheeks with Kone.

[Companion Chosen: Calculating Bonus]

[Gained Shared Spell: Draconian Regrowth] heals all Allies within 30 meter radius of selected point over 15 seconds.

[Gained Shared Ability: Wither] breathe a cone shaped cloud of Dragon Breath that damages foes and applies the [Wither] debuff, reducing Stats and resistances by 30 percent.

Dragon Breath as a bonus? Now that's just way too awesome. Not even Cain can breathe Dragon Breath. Everyone is so intrigued by the new Dragon that they don't even notice Cain awaken.

"Well aren't you a cute one. What might your name be little forest dragon?" Cain asks, unsure where this dragon came from.

"I'm Su. The Beast Lord Kone's Companion." The Dragon announces proudly.

"Good to meet you Su. I'm the Puppet Master known as Cain." He reaches over to pet Su's head and Laura, in her Pixie form, makes a disgruntled noise.

"This is Laura, the Opal Prismatic Dragon." Cain says, stroking the Dragon pixie's back to calm her down.

The rest of the group take turns introducing themselves before Cain turns to Kone. "So, I see it gave you a hidden class option already?"

"Yes, Beast Lord. I lost a bunch of my healing abilities, but got a Regeneration aura that cleanses. Su here grants me a huge area heal too, plus I've got a basic heal. There's some other stuff, like I get 8 Turtles now, but no bears, but the important part is Dragon Breath. I get Dragon Breath!"

"Okay, that is pretty awesome. I can't argue with that." Cain agrees. Seriously, Dragon Breath? That's going to be insanely broken when he clones her for combat. Like having a dozen Dragons all at once.

Cain doesn't realize that Kone has glossed over some of the crazier parts of her class, like the damage and Stat buffs, in her excitement about Dragon Breath. Even with what she just mentioned, the class seems pretty good, and the aura she's got active isn't bad either.

With the interface still active after the battle, Cain can see the potential healing incoming. 100 every second, with two stacks of the Aura. Likely one each from Kone and Su.

The sound of crews working outside is getting increasingly loud. The Guild Houses were all in this neighborhood, and Vala basically destroyed most of them looking for stragglers, so the streets are blocked in a number of places, and there are bodies everywhere that need removal before they start to smell up the place. The fact that the neighborhood looks like it's been painted blood red will have to wait until the next rainfall.

Being a good neighbor at heart, Cain wants to do something to help out. The Golems are smart and strong enough to clear the streets, but they're a bit scary to the townsfolk,

being large demons and all. Plus, they might be even more frightening now that they've been enhanced by his new skill [Glory of the Mark].

He's got the Puppeteer ability now, but no puppets. He could make some with the Voodoo Doll ability, if it makes them big enough. Cain tries for one his size, but the spell won't do it. So he goes for something Kone sized, failing again, but with just a little more shrinking he manages to make a Wood Nymph puppet about 120cm tall. The doll looks very spindly, but when he uses the [Puppeteer] ability it becomes a level 10 Puppet and has fairly decent stats.

He quickly repeats the Voodoo Doll spell, creating a total of twenty puppets that he sends out with orders to help with the cleanup. As they're still Voodoo Dolls, just animated, they've still got an active curse on them. Cain sets the curse to affect anyone who deliberately harms the Puppet, a simple failsafe that should teach people not to harm the helpful Wood Nymphs.

They're even less self motivated than the Golems, they don't do anything without instructions. But Cain's order does send them to the cleanup crews before they stop and wait for directions. After a few failed single task orders, the crews get the hang of them. Don't say bring the blocks to the pile, they'll just bring what they can carry and stop. Tell them to bring blocks from the street to the pile until this section of the road is cleared of rubble.

The [Voodoo Doll] spell isn't intended to last forever though, and a few hours later they all disappear. It was a good start, getting the area around the house they're staying in cleared out and it's almost time to clean up and get ready for the meeting in the City Square. The mayor will be informing everyone of current events and establishing his place back in the Mayor's office, as long as nothing goes too horribly wrong.

"Can you take a secondary form Su? City streets aren't really made for Dragon bodies." Cain asks the shaggy forest dragon currently occupying most of the foyer in the palatial Guild House.

"How about this?" Su shifts into a small Dryad, roughly the same size as Kone, with a dress made of leaves.

"That is an ideal size. Not too big, but not so small that you would need to fly to get around. Laura preferred this adorable shimmering dragon Pixie form, and to simply ride along on a shoulder or fly." Cain gives Su a gesture of approval for her chosen form.

"Why are there two of her though? I can see that she's been cloned." Su asks, tilting her head in confusion, as if looking from a different angle will make it make sense.

"It's an ability of mine. It clones all my summons and companions. The Vala twins, who are the pale winged Wrath Demons over there, and the Nemus are also companions."

Cain explains. Looking first to Vala, and then to Nemu, who has snuck up on the Dragon to investigate their new traveling Companion.

Vala waves her greeting, but Nemu gives the Dryad form Dragon a big hug from both sides.

"Good to meet you. We're Nemu, the group Bard." They say in unison.

"Good to meet you too. You're very soft, it feels good on my scales." Su greets them back, making the Felian laugh.

"Alright, we should start heading out if we're going to get to the meeting in time. Guild custom is that companions are active at all times, which is why I had you transform, Su. But I'll be dismissing the rest of the Summons that are currently out in the yard." Cain says as he does exactly that. It's been long enough since the fighting ended that the show of force shouldn't be necessary for a bit, though some fool is likely to attack during the meeting and try to either get rid of them or take over the city for themselves.

The mayor did say the locals took care of everyone who sympathized with the Montauk Guardians Guild and their tyranny, but someone always slips through the cracks. Even if it's just a political rival who wants the Mayor's position by any means necessary.

The looks they get as they head towards the town center are understandably skeptical, after all nobody in town knows what their intentions are, only that they used some sort of rapidly spreading debuff and Dragon Breath to take the city before the Guild ruling it could even formulate an organized defensive effort.

It had been so long since they were challenged that all sense of organization had crumbled and they had no guards at all except the patrol that hunts for transfers coming too close to the city.

The crowd is getting thick by the time they arrive at the town square, but a path clears up to the stone stage in the middle where the mayor is waiting to begin giving his speech. Climbing up the steps they can hear the crowd's unease.. Hopefully the mayor has a good speech ready.

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

Chapter 139 - 139

"Welcome everyone. I'm certain you all know why we're here, the Montauk Guardians and all four of their sub Guilds have been defeated and dissolved. They exist no more. This is thanks to the members of the Darklight Host, a Beginner's Valley Guild that came to investigate our situation. They will be taking over the Guardians main Guild House, but I'm told they're not interested in the others, should anyone wish to purchase them.

They do not intend to take over the city, instead returning it to my care as mayor, along with a city council to be elected. Was there anything you wish to add here?" The mayor gives a short overview before calling Cain to the stage.

"As the mayor said, I'm not like Guild Master AllNatty, I have no desire to run a city. In fact, I wasn't even here to save anyone, but the Guardians declared war on the Darklight Host, and I believe in finishing what you start. My suggestion is to find trustworthy friends and form new Guilds, ones of friends and like minded transfers to live the life you dreamed of before leaving the valley. If nobody acts the fool, there's no reason the city can't have peace and quiet.

Also, to the healers and others that fled the Guild before its destruction, if you can get a solid reference from the mayor or a trusted city figure, I see no reason you can't be given a second chance. But remember what happened to the others, if you were a Tyrant before, don't expect kind treatment." Cain says his past and then steps back.

"Those who want to run for council, step up to the stage. We will pick a temporary council tonight and then hold a proper vote two months from now." The mayor calls and one by one people start stepping forward. A few are dragged back by the crowd, but it doesn't take long until they've got ten faces in front of the stage.

"I'm Bill, the butcher who lives by the west gate, for those that don't know me. I've run my shop for thirty five years now." A huge man in a leather apron carrying an axe introduces himself and the crowd greets him happily. He seems well known and liked.

"I'm Agatha, the apothecary and midwife. I know most of you already, so I hope you'll support me for the city council." Says a kind faced woman with a deserter tag next to her name. She's also over level 120, one of the strongest they've seen in the city. She seems to make some people uncomfortable, but all the children like her, which is a good sign. Likely she's strict in her role as physician. Or very blunt spoken.

They go down the line until they get to the very last one in line. A grim faced warrior with heavily damaged armor on. The crowd is not at all pleased to see him.

"Please let me finish before you lynch me." He begs. "I'm Sheriff, formerly the treasurer, book keeper, and as everyone hates me for, tax collector. I know I'm not well liked, but I've kept the budget balanced and the city services running for the last six years. I'd appreciate it if you give me another chance."

Other than the fact they demolished a large chunk of it today, the city is in pretty good shape. Everything works, the public buildings have been maintained and such.

"Keep in mind that the mayor will be changing whatever tax system was in place, so judge him based on how he did his job and what he was like as a person. If he was good at his job, consider keeping him for the transition." Cain calls to stifle the anger in the crowd.

After much argument in the crowd, it's agreed that he was a good treasurer, but he's not trusted in the council, so he gets to keep his job doing the budget, but they need one more Councilor.

"What about the white winged Demon? She saved my son." Someone calls and a number of others agree.

"Or the Guild Master Cain. He did lead the force and cancel all our contracts when they transferred to him. He could have had us all, but he ended it without penalty." Another suggests.

"While I'm honored, I'm also a Summoned Being. Where my Summoner goes, I do too. So I couldn't serve on the council." Vala says, shocking most of the crowd. The thought that she wasn't a transfer never occurred to them. What sort of class can Summon something that powerful?

"Who is your Summoner? Maybe we can talk to them about it and work something out." Agatha, the apothecary suggests.

"That would be me." Cain says, raising his hand and Agatha laughs.

"So really, both votes are votes for you. Welcome to the city council, Guild Master."

"Fine, but I'm not running for the permanent position. I'll just stay long enough to clean up the mess I caused, and organize a new Branch location for the Darklight Host Guild." Cain reluctantly agrees.

"So your whole Guild will be moving here?" Someone in the crowd asks.

"No, only the ones that level out of the valley. We're keeping both of our houses there active by recruiting lower level transfers to fill in the spots left by departing members. That way they can have a smooth transition from the Elven Forest or Dwarven Hills right to level 100 and our new location here." Cain clarifies for them.

"You said you have a house in the hills, did you mean Ironheim?" A Dwarf asks and Cain shakes his head.

"No, Graska. We set up in the Dark Dwarven capital, a good spot inside the mountain next to the wall." Cain smiles as the Dwarf looks excited.

"So Houses with the Elves and Dark Dwarves but none inside the human cities? You've got an interesting Guild, Cain." The Dwarf says in approval. Cain's announcement seems to have made a lot of the locals relax. Perhaps relations between species isn't always as good as Cain thought it was?

The formal part of the night is a lost cause, everyone has broken off in groups listening to everyone's complaints and congratulations. Cain is quickly surrounded by Elves and Dark Dwarves looking for news. They get a bit from the transfers coming out, but many of them made it to level 100 entirely in the human and Orc kingdoms.

"Do you happen to know a fellow named Ragnar? He stays at a hostel near the dungeons." A stout Dwarf with a prodigious black beard asks.

"You mean Bertha's place? Not only do we know him, he's been working in our forge on and off for a while. We hired Gramps and a few from the Orphanage as well. The Darklight Host Guild House is the old tavern next to the Orphanage in the smithy district." Cain says and the Dwarf launches into a lively tale of drunken nights with Gramps and Ragnar.

Kone, being Spirit Folk, gets all of the Elves attention. She might know more secrets of the Elven Woods by the end of the night than anyone currently living in them. Cain rescues his young friend when he notices her head start nodding, sometime near midnight, many snacks and mugs of local ale later.

"My apologies everyone, it's been a long day and we should get home." Cain waves to the crowd, carrying Kone on his hip before retreating to the newly acquired house.

There's one thing left to do tonight. When he learned the Duke ability, his companions became Advisors. Which granted them the [Bonded Forces] ability. But none of them have selected their Bonded Forces yet.

He suggests that they take time to think it over, but Vala picks in seconds. Wrath Bringers. The larger cousin to her own form. Nemu takes a while longer, but ends up selecting Felian Assassins. They're adorable. Shorter versions of Nemu, the same Seal Point fur pattern, but they've got a disguise skill so they can freely change their outfits to blend in with the crowd.

The final hold out is Laura, she can't decide on who might be worthy of serving her. The fact they must be Golems and from the Dragon category is pretty limiting too, compared to Demon and Beastkin. She's pretty much just got Drakes to choose from. And there are no Drakes with her unique scale color, at least not that her or Cain know of. Eventually she settles on Ice Drakes, nearly white with a light blue under tone.

Compared to Laura, these things are huge. They are considered Greater Golems, but Drakes are large creatures compared to most. Only the original Laura Summoned them, so Cain isn't sure if the clone can as well, but 8 flying Drakes is a lot of firepower.

"I thought about Fire Drakes to burn things that won't freeze, but they're stupid and smelly and I don't want them around all the time." The Dragon, still in her Pixie looking smaller form explains. She's got a point too, Fire Drakes smell of Sulphur and Ash.. Not exactly the most pleasant of odors.

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

Chapter 140 - 140

The mayor and other councilors are taking their duties seriously. They've all gathered outside the Guild house Cain is staying in a half hour after sunrise. Vala lets them all in to get comfortable while Cain gets ready and Nemu makes breakfast for everyone, with the help of Su.

Not only is the Forest Dragon a foodie, she's also a competent cook. They manage a huge platter of eggs, bacon and pancakes with what is in the house, and Cain starts thinking about getting staff here too. Since they've got a Guild House or five in the city, linking this one with the others and getting someone to look after it should really be done.

He filled everyone in on what happened here before bed last night, since they saw the notifications about the Guild going to war, and and can see the score. It definitely wasn't what they thought was going to happen when his team went to investigate.

Sylvia and Luke are headed back this morning, to meet up with a section of the army that is near the border. Misaki has decided to stay, citing the entertainment value of traveling with this group. Cain suspects there's more to the reason, but she's a good mage, so he won't complain. She's currently upstairs with Kone, picking out a decorating theme for the house, which currently looks a bit like a frat party happened in someone's rich parents house. A mix of gaudy and expensive, and very messy, even with their minimal efforts to tidy the place up.

Cain intends to fix that though. There were Succubus with dusters and bunny girl costumes recorded as lesser Golems, so he calls them as everyone gets ready to eat, then triples them with Lesser Demon Army and orders them to clean the house. The council looks a bit scandalized, until they realize the demons are actually going to clean.

"Sorry about that, we'll be settled in soon, but AllNatty was a slob, so the whole place needs a deep clean." Cain explains.

"No worries, it's just a bit of learning curve to get used to how you do things. Demons are usually seen as a threat, not domestic staff or advisors. I could get used to the outfits though." Bill, the butcher turned city Councilor jokes.

"I think your wife might have a thing or two to say about you hiring them." The mayor laughs.

The morning meeting lasts about an hour before everyone breaks to go to their day jobs. They intend to meet again in the evening with anything that comes up, so Cain sends Nemu and Su shopping for groceries to make something fresh for dinner.

Cain drags Kone away from the decorating plans for a few minutes to explain the [Appointed Companion] and how it'll give her a power boost. A very large one at that. The extra combat power is great news for her.

One thing they forgot to account for was that all his abilities that apply to summons are applicable to the Appointed Companion.

[Error: Transfers cannot be cloned]

The notification makes them both chuckle, but when Kone calls on her Turtles to help remove broken furniture and trash there's sixteen of them instead of eight and they look extra mean. Summon Cloning and Glory of the Mark must both apply to class skill summons by the Appointed Companion.

"I don't think you're intended to have that many dungeon bosses in one spot. There's got to be a law against that, I'm certain of it." Misaki declares when she sees what they're up to.

"It gets far worse." Comes a voice from the kitchen and Su pops her head around the corner, then another Su does the same from the other side of the room.

"Sorry Su, we kind of forgot it would clone you too. But on the bright side, it's temporary, we don't have to keep it active all the time if you don't want." Kone apologizes.

The two walk towards each other and Meld into one being. "Problem solved, the Merger skill gets rid of the know it all copy in my kitchen."

Out of kindness, Cain declines to mention that the know it all she absorbed has exactly her personality. It seems Su takes her cooking very seriously if she can't even get along with herself in the kitchen.

Cain is about to start on more experiments involving Merger when there is a rapid knock at the door. Cain almost ignores it until he remembers that there's nobody else to answer it here. He's definitely spoiled himself in this life. Or maybe it's an improvement? In his past life he just assumed they were salesmen or debt collectors, so he never answered the door. He also wouldn't order delivery, being constantly short on money. In the end, he just instinctively avoided people at the door.

When he opens the door Cain is greeted with a large variety of tradesmen carrying tools and building materials.

"Let me guess, Misaki contacted you?" He asks with a smile.

"That she did. She came by every one of our shops with renovation requests. I can see that the house needs it, the previous owner wasn't well known for his sense of style. Frankly, you did well just getting it clean." The contractor closest to the door answers, holding rolls of paper in his hands.

"Come on in then. It looks like she hired half the city on our behalf." Cain says, looking at Kone who no doubt authorized all this. The Druid turned Beast Lord just shrugs as if to say it's better this way.

The genius of the plan is evident within minutes. There's one craftsman per room. They've got the designs that the ladies drew, and they're just shuffling between rooms as they finish. Being all level 100 or slightly higher, they've got almost everything in their inventory, and abilities that let them do their work in minutes instead of days. It's incredible, everything is finished before the city council shows up for the evening meeting.

Cain has no idea what most of the house now looks like, other than the front sitting room where they held the last meeting and the kitchen. The mismatched furniture was changed out in the sitting room, but the kitchen was deemed acceptable as it was. He will have to tour the place later and see how it all turned out.

The evening meeting is mostly focused on the town's inventory of goods. The Guild kept them strictly rationed so transfers couldn't get too powerful, so everyone is short on both equipment and money. There is only one dungeon in town, the Demon Dungeon, that they can do as a regular dungeon or a raid. Groups have been forming all day to go into the raid, but most of the healers fled before they could be granted clemency, and healers were in short supply to begin with.

Cain and Kone agree to lead groups in twice the next day, each staying a few hours or finishing the raid, depending what sort of raid instance they get. The council assumed most of the hoarded gear was lost with the Guild Banks, but the leaders had a surprising amount of loot on them, and Cain got all the money. After a few days of raid instance to help the locals he plans to donate some of his windfall to the city, he just needs to do it carefully, because Laura is very protective of the Guild's loot.

The issues of the city seem to be mostly minor so far, but that could be due to the shock keeping people at home and making them reluctant to complain.

Council agrees to meet after work tomorrow, giving them a full day to gather citizens input, and Cain posts a notice in the Guild House gates, that they will be carrying two groups through the Demon Raid tomorrow, so they'll need 22 per group, leaving spaces for him, Kone and Misaki.

With a few days under his experience buff, she should also reach level 100, most likely giving her the options of Fire Mage or the more Generic Archmage. She's fire specialized, but hasn't gotten any A or S ranked skill books, so the chances of accessing a hidden advanced class are low.

There are some good ones in the loot he got though, so Cain starts sorting through them to find something the mage might want.

"Is there anything in particular you're after? A fast build, area damage, Single Target Burns?" Cain asks, having sorted through the Mage compatible skill books. He will have to transfer them to the Guild Bank later, there's a [Crushing Roots] Nature type Mage spell that Mythryll would like.

"How about area damage. I've always kind of wanted a sea of fire and burning rain." She suggests. Cain decides the girl is a natural born pyromaniac.

There's not much in that category, but there is a Rank A [Lake of Fire] spell that's much like the toxic puddles his Sorceror summons use, and a Rank A [Firestorm] spell that's like an advanced Fire type Blizzard. It lasts a full 30 seconds, which is impressive.

Between the two, Misaki should be able to create a small version of her desired dystopian hellscape. If she becomes a Pyromancer like the one Cain saw earlier today doing wrought iron work, she will likely get bigger better versions.

"Both for me? You have no idea how much that means." She stammers with happy tears in her eyes.

"Stick with us and you'll get a lot of good stuff. As you can see, we're both displaying Iron Man Titles, which come with a nice little drop quality increase.." Kone smiles, adding herself to the hug, which makes Misaki laugh until she needs Cain to hold her upright.

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

Chapter 141 - 141

Everything important is done for the day, so Cain starts to explore the house. Everything looks fairly normal, though there are a number of things here that were clearly recreated from the transfers previous life. Dart boards and a Foosball table in the rec room for example. With the higher levels comes increased ability, and the amenities in this house could be considered completely modern, except for the lack of electronic devices.

From a battery powered analog clock on the wall to the enchantment powered light bulbs instead of enchanted candles and lamps, it reminds him of home quite a bit.

Before going to explore the upper floor, Cain goes to the back storage room in the basement, past the gym and rec room. Across from the forge and next to the room with the spinning wheel and loom. This is where he intends to set up the Transfer Portal. The setup is simple, set it in place, link it to the Guild House in Graska, and it automatically connects to the House in Sunnybrook as well. Five minutes work and it's placed and functional.

Just like in Graska, his room is on the second floor, the last one on the right, making up one whole end of the house. The empty bedrooms Cain looked into were completely normal, uniformity and luxury were clearly the intent when the girls gave the renovation order.

That is not the case for his bedroom here. It has been left mostly in the natural white marble of the House, with curtains on the walls, thick rugs and a positively huge four post bed. It's got to be three meters across and long, as if it were a king sized mattress for giants. Cain looks around, seeing a large closet standing open, with a dressing table visible inside, and a second door along that wall that most likely leads to the bathroom.

What really catches his attention though, are the oddly shaped furniture pieces, each in exquisite white leather with light oak wood and gold trim. An S shaped bench, a flat one with a cushion on the ground that looks like it's meant to kneel on. Cain also notes eyelets mounted in the roof, as if a chandelier had been taken down, but the room has indirect lighting all around the perimeter. Then near the window, two upright metal poles. There's something dangling from them, and looking closely to determine what it is finally clues Cain in to what all the oddities in this room are. The things hanging from the posts are shackles. The furniture in this room is all intended for either bondage or discipline play.

Moving a curtain on the wall reveals a wooden cross, and another reveals a rack, complete with a hanging board full of exotic accessories.

"Misaki, can you come in here a moment?" Cain calls loud enough to be heard from her bedroom or the living room downstairs.

"What do you think? It looked pretty good, so we didn't have the renovating team change anything in this room." The Mage says, walking in to answer his call.

"How closely did you look at this room?" Cain asks curiously.

"I mean, it's beautiful, white and gold themed, thick rugs, big bed. What else is there to see?" She asks.

"Look closely, very closely." Cain says, and Misaki starts actually taking in the room.

"Wow, did not expect that. I'm sorry, we should have really changed everything, but I didn't really look and I don't think Kone recognized any of the furniture in here. She was more interested in telling me about the lighting on the dressing table and the huge tub than anything else. She didn't even mention the spanking bench."

"We can deal with it later. The bed looks comfortable enough, so I'm going to call it a day. I'll be up for breakfast before the others start arriving." He waves off the Mage, who looks a bit mortified at her mistake and closes the door behind her.

A few seconds later it opens as Laura, Nemu and Vala all come in to see the bedroom, the Demon giving an amused glance at the furniture, while the Dragon in Pixie form is testing the pillows for one with the perfect density.

"Just let it slide, I'll have the room renovated later. The girls only looked at the color scheme before deciding to leave it as is." Cain explains to Vala, who nods and goes to explore the closet. Finding nothing else of interest at the moment she leaves again, probably headed for the library, while Laura has dragged a pillow up onto the curtain hanging over the bed and Nemu is making herself comfortable on either side of the mattress.

Knowing it's going to get bright far too early for his liking, Cain sets the alarm on the classic round alarm clock by the bed and pulls the curtains closed before settling in between the Felians for the night.

He is awoken from his slumber by the sound of laughter. Opening one eye, in case he can return to sleep and not need to open the other, he spots Misha through the curtains on the bed. She's just entered the room and seen the furniture, causing the outburst of laughter.

"You don't mind if I redecorate do you?" She asks quietly, looking at the curtain surrounded bed.

"Feel free. I was going to get to it today after breakfast." Cain says as Misha starts picking up most of the furniture around the room. Cain looks through his inventory for something comfortable to wear to breakfast, settling on his usual jeans and a black silk

shirt. After he moves Nemu to climb out of bed he equips a pair of boots and looks around the room.

Misha clearly came prepared, the topic must have come up last night. Maybe Misaki talked to Kone about it? But either way, she brought a white leather and Oak divan, two recliners with ottomans and a large armoire. Most of the old furniture has been picked up, but Misha left the St Andrew's cross on the wall behind a curtain and the posts by the window. Cain gives her a Questioning look and she returns a wink with a blushing face that almost makes him reconsider his plans for the day.

"How is recruitment coming along in Sunnybrook? Any good leads?" Cain asks, wrapping an arm around Misha's waist and pulling her close.

She nestles her face into his chest and sighs. "We're really popular with small children and crafters. What sort of Guild are we even trying to build?"

"Go for a family atmosphere. Find people you would like to hang out with and go from there. All we need are more up and coming members to keep the houses occupied. Even a handful in each city is as many as we've got already, and that's plenty.

"In that case, there's two older boys from the Orphanage in Graska, a cleric and a Warrior, plus a young Earth Mage woman who would be a great fit. We've been flooded with applicants in Sunnybrook, so it's taking longer to get to meet everyone properly." With just her and Dimnys on recruiting duty, and everyone else out helping the alliance with the Ogres they are a bit short handed.

Cain sets Misha as a Guild Officer, so she can recruit whoever she wants and the two head down to see who else is up, Nemu deciding at the last minute to join them, due to the alarm clock finally going off.

The topic over breakfast is the flood of potential Guild Members in Sunnybrook. Their thought, and that of Mythryll and Char in Guild chat, is that they should follow Dimnys lead in Graska and pick them young, barely beginning to level. They can carry them through the easier dungeons to rapidly bypass the lowest levels, thanks to the Guild Skill of Demon Army, and starting with youth means less of the baggage and ego that comes with some of the more experienced fighters.

The young ones growing up in the Guild, plus a few more experienced crafters who are easy to get along with should make for a good balance. Adding a third Guild House, plus their recent rewards for the battles with the Ogres has given them the option to double the size of the Guild Bank Storage, and to have up to fifty members in total. More than enough for their plans.

Lickity thinks she knows just the right crafters, a young married Elven couple who specialize in pottery and sculpture. She met them a few years ago when they were traveling, and now they're Guildless and based in Graska, she even had them in her

friends list. That sounds workable, so she is going to arrange a meeting with Misha, who will be returning after breakfast.

But first, she will stop in at Graska and bring in their new members there. Party balance matters, as they won't always be in a Guild Group that can bring a small army of summons with them, plus the Lesser Demons don't really fill every role.

You can pick one that tanks, or one that does good damage but not both at the same time.. The limitations of the Lesser Golem category.

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

Chapter 142 - 142

Misha runs off to Graska to finish the recruitment, while Cain greets the morning's batch of raiders. Maybe the Guild War was for the best. They never intended to have a Guild House here, but now that they do, he won't be separated from Misha for months at a time.

"Welcome to the Darklight Host Guild House everyone. Check off your name on the applicant sheet, so we can see if everyone is here and signed up." Cain begins, while looking over the group. They're an odd bunch, mostly crafters with life skill related titles visible by their names in the interface, but there's three healers, all subclasses of the Cleric class, with deserter tags, so they've got a good mix.

"Tanks on the right, healers to the left, damage dealers remain where you are. As everyone likely recalls, My class is based around Summons, so the group composition doesn't really matter, I can make up the difference." Cain starts getting the group sorted, finding that they've got four potential tanks, all under geared except one burly green half Orc named Norm with a Blacksmith achievement title. The healers look to be in better shape, having previously been Guild Members and allowed good enough gear to do the dungeon runs.

"Alright, Norm, you can stay as a tank. The rest of the potential tanks can just focus on dealing damage until you get some gear. The drop rate is pretty good, and lots of coins are usually in the loot, so you might be alright after today." Cain instructs.

"What's the loot split?" Norm asks, leaning on his shield.

"System allocation, private drops. Whatever you get is yours, no questions asked. If you want to trade something that's not suitable for you, you can sell it later, or ask at the end of the run if anyone got something you need. Remember, it's private so nobody else will see what you got. You'll have to tell them if you want them to know." Cain explains and the group looks at him like he's insane.

"Private loot and no fee? What's the catch?" One of the Clerics asks.

"We've both got Iron Man Titles that increase our drop rates and quality. We'll do alright without a fee." Kone answers on Cain's behalf and the group chuckles.

The bonus applies to the whole group, but the ones with the title always seem to get the best of it. In normal circumstances, where a party actually needs the extra members to do a raid, they'd use the title to reduce or eliminate the fee they pay to join an overpowered group, because everyone would get extra loot. The carry group having the title is a whole other thing, usually they'd charge more to the ones needing their help, not less.

"Call it a public service. The city needs to get back on its feet, and a lot was lost when the Guilds fell. So twice a day until I get bored or annoyed, we will continue leading Raids into the Demon Dungeon." Cain adds and the cleric nods. Cain is a City Councilor now after all.

They all head to the dungeon entrance and Cain leads them in, summoning everything before the others follow and separating them into groups.

Each Vala twin will lead a group with fifteen Greater Lamia Scourge Casters, Eight Wrath Bringers from her Personal Guard, two Epic clones of Kone, along with their sixteen Snapping Turtles, their copies of Su and Nemu, with her Felian Assassins.

That leaves Cain with the twenty four Wrath Bringers, now Epic Demons and presumably much stronger than before, Four Epic Dread Spiders, now twice Cain's size, four Epic Plague Mages, two clones of Kone along with two Dragon form copies of Su, plus their Turtles and the ever present Wasps.

Laura and her Drakes will be working as scouts for whoever needs it, their high flight speed giving them the mobility to pick and choose.

The last thing on the list is to pick an Epic Summon. This looks like an open city Wrath Demon type raid instance, so Cain goes for a Boss he found in a Succubus type dungeon, called an Oath Breaker. It's a six armed Demon as tall as the Wrath Bringers, but much more agile. Every hand ends in long claws that cause [Cripple] and they can teleport short distances to appear behind their target and attack.

With Cain's [Glory of the Mark] buffing them to Legendary status they've gained a shadowy aura, but other than that, they still look to be the same leather pants clad

shirtless Demon they've always been. The two of them appear and instantly become four, smiling evil grins at each other before looking at Cain.

"Can we clear this place? You called us here to kill, right?" One of them asks.

"We are leading a group through this place. Protect them and kill all the residents of this place, but don't start until they're all here." Cain instructs them.

"You have a deal. It will be glorious." They reply in unison, creeping Cain out.

"One last thing. I am going to cast a spell on you, tripling your numbers, make good use of it." Cain says and uses [Lesser Demon Army] to turn the four into twelve. The one that spoke first looks behind Cain, one finger extended to count all the group members that have appeared while they were talking.

"That's all of them. Can we go now?" The Demon hisses in excitement.

"Yes, and remember to protect your allies if you see them in trouble. Now, go have fun." Cain instructs and the Demons vanish. They're not idle though, Cain's chat log shows an immediate flood of notifications about dead demons.

"That's our cue. Have fun everyone." Vala says and the two forces break off to find targets.

"All that and you still kept enough Summons here to guard the group? No wonder the city fell in a day. Even those twelve Legendary Demons would annihilate most Guilds." Norm says with admiration.

"Don't forget me." Laura says, finally shifting into a pair of shimmering white Dragons.

Cain scratches the spot on her head behind her horns and turns to the group. "A fast as those Oath Breakers are, we might be short on targets, and I've got no idea what way they went. So, we will pick a direction that Vala didn't lead a force towards and get this run started." Cain says, turning the Wrath Bringers to the far left where a road leads between what looks like ruined store fronts.

"I'm already getting drops, not just silver and gold, I got new armor." A warrior cheers, putting it on to replace the low level item he was wearing. That only makes sense, with so many Demons loose and destroying this dungeon, they're bound to get some early drops.

Cain sees a group of Dark Red Demons with swords up ahead and signals the group that they've found their first fight. They're level 108, about the average for the group, which is encouraging. Most of them should get experience bonuses, beyond the one Cain is silently giving them. With so many fighters out of sight, it will also make it

impossible to gauge experience per kill against what they already knew, helping hide the one skill he prefers not to advertise to strangers.

Norm and the Wrath Bringers are just about to engage the group when an Oath Breaker appears, tearing the two Demons to shreds in an instant before laughing and disappearing again.

"First of all, let me say thank you for NOT setting those things loose in the city. Secondly, can this even be counted as a dungeon run if we don't kill anything?" One of the Mages asks, shaking her head.

"If there's experience, it's a run. No matter how unfair it might seem." Cain shrugs.

"The man has a point. Lead the way and let's find something they missed. I came for a fight and I'm going to find a fight." Norm insists, charging ahead in search of more Demons.

It didn't take long, there is a whole city in this instance from what Laura has reported to Cain from her vantage in the sky. She's Summoned her Ice Drakes and is serving as the main group's scout, leading them to areas that haven't been cleared yet.

They've found a group of six Wrath Bringers, who are visibly upset at what they see as traitors charging them with the raid party. Norm has found his fight, crashing shield first into a Demon a full head and more taller than even his burly frame. He uses a heavy hammer with his shield, pure blunt force to match his personality. The fight only lasts about eight seconds, but it's put him in a better mood.

Laura indicates more Demons down this road, frosting them up with her breath to show the way and the group takes off running, what is normally a time of caution and fear for the under geared is now a challenge to get a hit in before the target dies.

"Alright, I'm thoroughly exhausted. I haven't gone for a run like that in ages." Norm says to the equally sweaty and tired group. As the numbers dwindled, the Oath Breakers took great joy in intercepting any targets that the raid found, snuffing them out moments before the raid group could arrive. Thus the marathon type exertion.

"Next time, I'm only bringing four of them. That was ridiculous." Cain laughs, taking a long pull of Dwarven mead from a wine skin.

"If anyone wants to trade a drop item with the group, this is the time. After this, I politely ask that you keep your drops secret unless you're selling them. We don't need a rash of robberies from people who just finished a run through the dungeon. The sign up sheet isn't exactly a secret." Cain instructs the group and a few members link items in raid chat. Nothing terrible, just unsuited for their class or build.

Most of them have gotten a few good items, so the trades are completed without issue and they exit the dungeon in high spirits, waving goodbye as the group dissolves and heading home to shower.

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

Chapter 143 - 143

They got finished just before lunch, so Cain and the girls stop along the way back to the house to grab takeout. They've got a little over an hour before the next group, but after all that running, a shower is a necessity along with eating.

If they didn't have anyone with them, Cain would have just sent the groups led by Vala and the Oath Breakers on their way and stayed by the door to have a picnic and play cards. The summons don't sweat, let them do the running.

But that would be a bit overkill when leading a raid, and lead to inflated expectations, so they'll have to do it properly in the future.

They finish the boxes of beef and noodles as they reach the house, finding a few early arrivals already present. One of them recognizes Misaki, so they disappear together to chat while they wait. The group is almost all arrived before Cain gets out of the shower and heads down to greet them.

"It looks like we're only waiting on two warlocks named Sam. The handwriting and pen is different, so I don't think they're the same person. Anyone know them?" Cain asks.

"The brats? They're level forty, born right here in town. I ran them off for their prank. We can go a few short." An older man informs him with an annoyed voice.

"Were still here!" Comes a young teasing reply from behind a nearby fence.

"Well then get over here. You signed up to do a dungeon run and I'm going to see that you do it even if I have to put you in a sack and carry you." Cain calls back, signaling Nemu to go grab the youngsters, who turn out to be a pair of mountain Dwarves in their preteen years. Likely not in actual years, as Dwarves age more slowly, taking nearly thirty years to make full maturity, but in appearance.

There's a struggle as Nemu stuffs them into a pair of burlap bags with only their heads showing, but they stop when the Felians start bringing them back to Cain.

"Look, we're sorry, it was just a joke." The lighter haired boy apologizes.

"But I'm still bringing you. Don't worry, we'll keep you safe. Plus, it will be entertaining for everyone else. Who here has seen what happens when you bring someone sixty levels below a dungeon in with your group?" A few hands go up at Cain's question, but most look perplexed.

There's enchanted training dummies in the school that grant experience, most kids with the interface train there or in the woods hunting wild Beasts, since the Guild didn't allow them to go into the Beginner's Valley to level up. The thought of taking them somewhere as dangerous as the Demon Dungeon never crossed their minds.

"Alright, we're off to the dungeon." Cain says, hefting both sacks of warlock over his shoulders.

The boys mom catches up to the group just before they reach the entrance, loudly shouting about the punishment they've got coming to them for 'Playing pranks on the City Councilor'.

"Don't worry ma'am I've got them. I'm sure they'll be plenty repentant by the time they return, but I won't let them be seriously harmed, you have my word.

She looks skeptical, but one of the group whispers to her about the nausea and headache caused by the flood of notifications and she repents, promising that they've got more punishment coming when they get home. That makes the boys look like they'd rather live in the burlap sacks, but at least Cain is no longer in danger of being called a kidnapper.

The moment they enter the dungeon, Cain calls forth all his summons, and Vala expertly splits her groups off to the sides. He only calls four Oath Breakers this time, but Laura calls all her Drakes, Eight per clone, which fills the nearby sky with pale white scales as they circle overhead. Cain sees Succubi, so this must be a Lust or enchantment type instance. The Drakes are freezing the demons nearby while the Oath Breakers wait eagerly for everyone to arrive.

"Since it's everyone's first time here with me, let me explain. The summons in the groups to the sides will go do their own thing and clear the dungeon. The ones nearest to me will accompany the raid. The white Dragons and the Drakes will be our scouts, locating groups. Now, who wants to carry the warlocks?"

"I've got them." A big warrior laughs. "We've got plenty of front line fighters today, I'm sure one more won't be missed. Plus I want a front row seat to this, these brats painted my store windows green just last week."

He takes control of the sacks, making the boys both turn pale in fear. But there's not much they can do now, even if they used a spell to cut themselves free, they would still be trapped in the dungeon by twenty angry transfers nearly three times their level. Plus the Felian that caught them is really fast. No way could they escape from her.

All eyes are on the boys as Cain sends Vala's groups and the Oath Breakers out. The wave of notifications hits them hard, the text blurbs in their vision sliding off in every direction as the next one takes its place in the center of their interface. The warrior carrying them sets the bags down and lets them try to stand for a moment, but the dizziness overcomes them and they collapse in seconds, complaining about how evil Cain is and that the punishment doesn't fit the crime.

But they're getting a lot of levels, so there is not much sympathy for their plight among the transfers, most of whom would have gladly taken their place when they were young adventurers in the Beginner Valley.

Cain signals for the man to pick them up again, and he simply flips one over either shoulder, facing the ground, before falling in with the group.

"The Drakes have found us a lot of targets, everyone be safe and have fun." Cain says, leading them to the first group of frozen demons not mauled into bits by the Oath Breakers.

There's an odd pattern to this dungeon though, some spots where there clearly should be demons, there is nothing. It has Cain stumped until they find the perfect ambush spot in a muddy alley abandoned and see the footprints. These are Lust Demons, just like the Oath Breaker, who lusts for battle. The Legendary demons have been collecting those they deem worthy to accompany them through the dungeon.

Cain isn't sure what they're planning to do with them later, but for now is not a big deal, a few missed targets is normal in a raid this size and layout.

Getting a dungeon spawn in an underground labyrinth would be a pain for the group though. Cain hasn't come across any too small for his demons, but trying to walk that many Dragons and Drakes through an enclosed dungeon would be a mess. Though the Dragons could at least transform.

With only four Oath Breakers the dungeon feels more like a dungeon, they're constantly in battle, following the lead of the drakes and Laura to find a continual stream of targets. Cain even finds a bunch of new demons to add to his list in this dungeon, an uncommon sight, as he's collected so many already.

They're long since done and back at the entrance, watching the boys curse, whine, pout and try to deal with the notifications before the two warlocks are functional again.

"I'm level 87. Eighty Seven. That is amazing. Thank you so much Mister Cain. How can we ever make it up to you?" The darker haired Sam asks.

"No more playing Pranks. You're grown adventurers now, so it's time to be responsible and start acting like the growing young men you are." Cain says sternly, the targets of his lecture not at all looking like the young men he called them.

"Yes sir. We certainly will." They agree in unison and the warrior that was carrying them laughs again, as he's been doing the whole dungeon.

"Don't forget, your mom is still right outside the exit, waiting for you. While Councilor Cain has forgiven you, you know your mom isn't so easy to please." He informs them and they look panicked.

"Can you hide us in the bags again? Just for a day or two until she calms down. This is the second time we've been caught this week, and our backside can't take any more." The Darker Haired Sam begs.

"Sorry boys, call it a learning experience, to remind you of your promise not to play pranks like little boys anymore." Cain says, ushering them out to meet the glowering face of their mother. But she's not alone, a second Dwarf in a flour covered apron has joined her, standing with his arms crossed.

"Dad, hi, we didn't expect to see you here. We can explain. Really this time." The boys begin before being dragged away by their parents.. Hopefully they learn this time, or Cain has just created much stronger practical jokers.

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

Chapter 144 - 144

When they get back to the house, Misaki asks them to watch out for her for a bit, even relegating her old friend Lysander to the downstairs lounge. She reached level 100 during the second raid and wants to take a good look at her advancement options without being distracted.

"So, you met Misaki while you were still in the Beginner's Valley, what was she like then? We met her just a little while ago. The Alliance forces wanted someone to investigate the Exit City while they worked on getting the Ogres back within their old borders."

"She was a sweetheart. I met her when she first arrived, just a confused tiny transfer in a small village in the Elven Forest. I thought she'd been Reincarnated as a child at first, until I realized her species." The Ranger replies, his eyes showing that he's lost in his memory.

"I made that mistake too. I thought I'd gained a little sister when she first joined us." Kone laughs.

"That had to be hard on her pride. She hates getting mistaken for a child. We dated for a while, then I reached level 100. I had intended to return right away, but you know how that goes. It transferred me right into the middle of the city, and the Guild was waiting. She probably thought I leveled out of the valley and abandoned her, right up until you guys got here and wiped out the Montauk Guardians." He says sadly.

"Are you going to win her back?" Cain asks with a smile and Lysander grins back.

"You'd better believe it. I just hope I can keep her around until I can win her heart. We're not in a Guild together, and she's just accompanying you on a mission, so I don't know how long she's staying." The Elf adds.

"She reached level 100, so she's not going back anytime soon. She would have to do the quest first, and I hear it takes time. But I'd be willing to take you both into our guild if you'd like. You're both good people, and we go for more of an extended family vibe in the Guild." Cain suggests.

"Let us talk it over, now that she's leveled out of the valley, she might need a moment to think over where she's headed in life. If it's not here, I'll just follow her."

They sit and chat about everything and nothing while they wait for the Mage to finish with whatever she's doing. It's well over an hour before the Mage comes down the stairs with a big smile on her face. Examining her information, as expected her class setting no longer says Mage, but instead reads Pyromancer.

"I only had a few points saved to put into abilities, but I got a huge bump to my Fire Damage and a sweet transformation." She announces, changing forms. Her Robes turn to a flickering red and orange combination, while her hair turns to actual fire, swaying around her shoulders. Flames wreath her hands and she seems to be floating slightly off the ground.

"Pretty cool isn't it? I can only do it for five minutes every thirty right now, but as I level up I'll be able to do it all the time. It gives me mana cost free fireballs and extra armor as well as a movement speed increase."

"I must say, that is pretty awesome. Infinite mana while chain casting fireballs is pretty powerful." Cain agrees.

"It's got nothing on you though, the Puppet Master Class is just crazy. But once I get some more points I'll start getting powerful really quickly too. In the description the Pyromancer gets an Elemental that really buffs them and increases mana regeneration, but I didn't have enough points left to get it for two more levels."

"That's a shame, but stick with us and you'll get there soon enough." Cain's not joking, they're doing two dungeons a day, and with his bonus, he almost reached level 101 today. Keeping up like that she could probably get the skill she wants by the end of the week.

"Have you thought about what's next?" Lysander asks.

"Well, I was going to ask to join the Darklight Host, since I can't go back to the Sunnybrook Army. With the level restrictions around the valley and all I kind of ended that career. But what are you going to do?" She counters.

"Where you go, I go."

With them both agreed, Cain sends out a pair of Guild invitations and Misaki squeals with joy, making Nemu cover her ears and retreat to the kitchen.

[Misaki has joined the Guild]

[Lysander has joined the Guild]

Since it's getting late already, and two Raids in a day is a lot of work, the decision is made to call it a day right after dinner. Su and Nemu are cooking again, they seem to be enjoying all the praise they get for the meals, and they make a pretty good kitchen team. Tonight is a vegetarian curry, Elven Forest style, because Lysander mentioned this afternoon that he missed the Elven Forests cooking. Cain, on the other hand was getting quite used to Dwarven cooking. Meat, potatoes and alcohol. He exercises enough to keep his figure anyhow.

The two new recruits sign the standard Guild contracts Cain gives to every member, highly amused by the fact they're getting paid 20 silver a month, when at level 100 they can earn that in the dungeon in minutes. The prices of everything in this city are also extortionate, being jacked up by the former Guild and the available cash flow. There's not much Cain can do about that though, so the 20 silvers will continue to mean very little to high level members.

The three new recruits in Graska seem to be pretty excited about it though, the two boys want to live off their efforts in the dungeon, and haven't had a full time job yet, just the piece work the Orphanage Matron finds for them, while the Earth Mage is a few years older and was working in the mines. She's very happy to get out of there, and with an income and a home guaranteed by the Guild, she intends to focus on crafting. She wants to make luxury furniture, a Dwarven specialty that Cain is certain will sell well here in Montauk, the exit city.

With the price difference, quality Earth Mage created Dwarven furniture would make her a very rich Dwarf by local standards.

Cain looks over the Guild Bank balance, seeing that they made a few hundred gold today from the two Raids. Both him and most of the other members deposit most of their earnings in the Guild Bank, knowing Cain won't give them trouble if they need to pull money out again later. It's easier for everyone that way, as more often than not, they send someone else to go get them supplies, and the hired staff can use the Guild Funds on authorized spending.

They're likely going to need to hire someone to take care of this house too, unless Cain gets creative with the summons. The cooking is taken care of, and the grocery shopping, but the cleaning will need assistance.

Cain brings it up with the group and Nemu suggests the Felian Assassins clean and maintain the house. They're agile, obey her orders, plus she can use their disguise skill to dress them in cute maid outfits. She summons them and has them change to demonstrate, giving everyone the amusing sight of eight very disgruntled Assassins in adorable black dresses.

Since they're Assassins, they can also work as house security while they're here. This helps them accept the outfits a little better, since it's a proper disguise again and not just Nemu playing dress up with them. They get to cleaning everything while the Guild members finish eating and get ready for bed. Nemu is overseeing her Bonded Forces tonight, making sure they know what needs doing, so Cain is alone in bed for a change.

It's a strange feeling, the bed is normally very warm, either from Misha or Nemu, and it's totally flat. He needs another pillow to get comfortable. He's so distracted by this fact that he entirely forgets to set his alarm clock, only waking up when Vala comes in to warn him that the first of the next day's raid members have arrived.

The sign up sheet filled even more quickly this time, even with those who went yesterday banned from coming again today. Lysander bowed out of coming along today, needing to take care of things in the city and get himself properly moved over to the Guild House. The excitement is the same as yesterday though, perhaps even higher after word spread that it was secret random loot and that they weren't taking a fee for the runs.

That's good, the more people who can get in on the action the better. Cain has even started to notice 5 person groups running the dungeon, a sign that things are starting to get back to normal already. A poor and hungry city is a lousy market for a Guild with as many crafters as Darklight Host. The more money they can help people make the better it is for everyone.

Including them. Cain's inventory is almost half full of gear again, and he cleared it before yesterday's Raids.. At this rate he'll bury the crafters in work trying to remake the items with strange attributes.

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

Chapter 145 - 145

"Welcome everyone to the first group of Day Two of the city council organized Raids. As I'm sure you all heard if you didn't already know, our party can field a lot of summons. They will be in three groups, two of them independently clearing the raid and one more helping the main raid group. Loot will be secret and random, assigned by the interface. We won't be taking a cut off these runs, they're to help the citizens get back on their feet." The crowd cheers his words, happy that the rumors were true in a positive way for a change.

"Now if I can get tanks to the right and healers to the left, we can get started."

There are quite a few healers today, seven in total. They must have been in hiding yesterday waiting for their deserter tags to wear off before showing their faces in public. All the locals clearly know who they are, so they're not new arrivals, and Cain did give his word to give clemency to the ones that fled the Guild before it fell, as long as the citizens did. None of these guys are getting any murderous looks, so Cain is calling that acceptance.

They've only got two tank volunteers though, and the group looks worried about the chances of this raid group composition working.

"As I said earlier, we've got lots of summons. Today they'll take up the tank role so everyone can damage and heal while they take the brunt of the damage. Now, in we go, I'll lead and bring out the summons first so they have room to spread out." Cain says before leading the way to the entrance portal.

He steps inside to find a diseased and rotten swamp, home to the Plague Demons. He also notices that the healing from multiple Kone and Su pairs doesn't stack, only 2 stacks of the Aura, even with 6 pairs out of 7 nearby. But the cleanse effect is more frequent. That's good news for the group, as the debuffs in here are likely to get pretty brutal. It was in a dungeon like this one that Vala gained Pestilence after all.

Cain decides to use Lesser Demon Army on everything, because it's better to not have to work too hard when you're expecting to get constantly Poisoned and Crippled.

These Demons will be immune to that effect, but Vala should still be doing enough damage to keep up reliable healing. Things seem to be going as planned until a Shadow Warrior, an advanced Rogue type class enters and all the Oath Breakers turn to stare at him, like they do to everybody they see for the first time. It's creepy, but that's just how they are.

"Those are Oath Breakers. The Legendary Raid Boss. One of them eliminated almost the entire sixth Guardian Guild after they got locked in the boss room." The man says in a shaky voice.

"I heard about that, AllNatty almost got killed, he left with only two other Raid members when they finally killed it." Another agrees.

"Forget the Tyrant, that thing is terrifying. How does it compare to the one they faced?" One of the healers asks Cain.

"I can't really say, since I don't know what level they were at, but it should be pretty comparable to one my level. Anything they lack in power they make up in Numbers." Cain shrugs, indicating the small army of summons.

Nobody seems to have any more questions, so Cain sends Vala's teams and the Oath Breakers on their way after giving the Legendary Demons their usual instructions to help any ally they see in trouble. They seem to understand, or remember, the system this time and have decided to leave a path of demons untouched for the main party to fight.

With maximum Summon numbers spread out all over the dungeon, it's pretty obvious that they're getting drops even when they're not actively fighting, but the raid groups have developed an unspoken agreement not to talk about anything they see in here. Not that anyone who hasn't seen it would believe them anyhow.

Telling people that the city council Summoned Legendary Demons and dozens of Drakes and Dragons to help gear the townsfolk just makes you sound like a lunatic.

"Everyone try to avoid getting multiple stacks of the poison and Pestilence Debuffs, it just makes life hard on the healers. If you get two stacks, back up and let them clear off while the Tank Type summons take the damage." Cain says as they engage a group of Plague Mages with infected rats as an annoying companion.

The strategy is working fairly well, the Oath Breakers are so durable that the debuffs that do get through their resistance don't matter while the groups led by Vala haven't lost any members yet, according to Cain's interface, so they must be doing alright. For their part, the Epic Quality Snapping Turtles have incredible resistance, shrugging off most effects, while the Epic Quality Wrath Bringers are just savages, they take damage from all sorts of debuffs, but ones that should slow or weaken them seem to have no effect at all.

The difference between greater and epic quality might be hard to tell at a glance, but in combat it's immense.

[Level Up]

Cain and Kone smile at each other in victory. Experience scaling from the dungeons didn't quite keep up with the scaling as they increased levels. They've almost cleared the third raid now to get a single level. With the modifier from the number of summons and party members, the average raid would have to grind every day for most of the year to get the same benefit.

Even with his Guild carrying him through extra runs, AllNatty only made it to level 137 in the decades he was in the city. Presumably he had some sort of experience buff or a Guild member with one as well. Such things aren't unheard of, in fact, Cain has already encountered quests that gave extra experience for a time.

The morning raid has come to an end without too much drama and the raiders are excited to get home and enjoy their gains.

"If anyone wants to trade an item, this is the time to do it. As we asked the other groups, keep quiet about your drops until you've sold them or used them. The last thing the city needs is transfers getting mugged."

"I've got an A ranked book of Blizzard to trade." Says one of the Berserkers. Wow, was that an entirely unsuited drop. Most of the time they're at least usable by your class, or a sub class similar to it.

"I'll trade you an Epic shield that heals you when you block and 5 repair Tokens." Says an Elemental Shaman. They can use mage books of the elements they've put points into, with increasing effect as they add more points until they can cast that element at full base effect.

It's not as high of damage as a mage type class, but very versatile with their Totems and heavier armor.

The Repair Tokens are an item Blacksmiths can create that instantly repairs an armor piece to full durability. A Prepaid mobile equipment repair service of a sort.

"Deal." The Berserker says after looking over the shield. Not many of his class go a tank route, but a good shield can be a life saver if things get strange in a dungeon.

"Anyone need a ring that enhances Earth Elemental damage?"

"How about Pauldrons with 30 percent damage reflection?"

A few more trades are done and the group heads home, Cain returning again to the Guild house to shower and change before the afternoon raid.

He drops the gear and materials he's gotten into the Guild bank and gets a load of happy notifications from the crafters in return. These high level items are perfect to increase their skill level on. The Dwarven Earth Mage that just joined them in Graska

even has an addition of their own, Quality Dwarven made furniture. A full living room and bedroom set to be exact.

Cain takes a moment after eating to run over to the Merchant Hall before the next group starts to arrive and puts the furniture up for 12 hour auction. Somewhere around midnight tonight they'll find out what the demand is like and what the furniture sells for in this higher level city.

"Find everything you needed?" Norm, the half Orc Tank asks him, walking in as Cain is headed out.

"Actually I was posting up some Dark Dwarf made furniture created by a Guild member. We thought the city might enjoy a little more Dwarven craftsmanship." Cain laughs, watching the big man look through the postings.

"12 hour unreserved auction. Testing out the demand are you?" Norm asks, nodding his head as if the answer is already determined.

"I'll let the Dwarves know, and they can look it over and critique the construction, you know how they are."

Yes, that Cain does, they take great pride in their work. But that also means of this batch of furniture gains their approval it will garner a much higher price from those who trust their judgement.. A calculated risk he is taking to make a name for her furniture, instead of selling it at generic retail prices.

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

Chapter 146 - 146

The afternoon group has begun to gather by the time Cain returns to the Guild House, forming an organized group outside and chatting happily. Much of the banter is about the new items that had have gone up on the market for discount prices. Sellers names are hidden by default, but it looks like one or more of the defectors was a Guild officer and cleaned out the bank or the Guild vault before they fled. Now there's a lot of equipment available, and those with money have geared up.

The hidden stats in the gear get a big upgrade at level 100, so the preferred route is to find the high level gear, but Cain can see that many of the members grabbed up the lower level gear to be fully equipped, as there are distinctive item appearances from the

Naga dungeon showing on this group. The Guardians confiscated everything when transfers showed up in the city, so this sight is a new but familiar one to Cain.

As he approaches, the group splits into three, with four reasonably equipped tanks and six healers. There's also a number of transfers off to the side that aren't part of the raid, and Cain is a bit confused.

"We're planning to run the 5 man dungeon but we're short a Healer, we were hoping to borrow one from the raid if they had extra." A Paladin explains, stepping forward in his heavy plate armor. At this level, a healing tank is nice to have, but generally far from enough for the whole group.

"Oh, hey Marcus. Didn't know you were running this afternoon or I would have signed up for a different spot." One of the healers says, giving Cain a pleading look.

"Go ahead. And if any of you want to join the other two groups, please do so we can get everyone going. I can make up the difference with summons in the Raid. Tomorrow I'll have a regular group finding sheet out front as well, for everyone to see what is lacking and quickly organize runs."

Two more split off and Cain sees an old woman come forward, clearly not intending to fill one of the vacant spots.

"I'm Martha, your neighbor across the road. If you'd like I can organize the sign up sheets and keep the random groups going. My place is a pawn shop, so the system gives me the ability to direct message those who do business with me."

That would be incredibly handy. Find a group, buy random items you might need and discount pawn things you want to get rid of, all in one spot?

"Sounds like a deal to me. I'll talk to the rest of the council tonight and see if we can get you paid as a public service. Something to cover your time so you don't have to charge for the sign up." Cain suggests and the old woman nods before returning to her home. Without her saying so, Cain would have never known it was a pawn shop, perhaps it wasn't sanctioned by the Guild before so she had to operate under the radar.

Three more transfers are called over by group members as Cain decides he might not have to lead these Raids much longer. A day or two for the group finder to work out any bugs in the system and Martha should be able to take over his job here. There's a lot of groups gathering though, and not nearly enough healers. Word spread in seconds that Martha was running a group finder, but most of the healers in town have already done a run today, or are currently in one.

"Hold up a moment, I've got an idea." Cain smiles at the afternoon group.

There are five well geared groups waiting on healers now, so Cain heads over to Martha's place with his proposal. If they still haven't found anyone after he's done his second run, Cain will send cloned healers along with them to make up a Raid group. They can run with his summons while he rests.

The idea doesn't seem terrible to anyone there, five tanks and five healers is way more than most Raids get. Heck, two of each is considered a passable group, though a third Healer is preferred.

Cain would split them between Raids, but for the [Advanced Supporter] to join a group, Cain himself must be in the group. So no matter how many extras he has, they can't all join different parties.

"If you need, we can join other parties." Vala says, indicating Nemu and Laura. If Cain didn't know better he'd think Vala was reading his mind. Though come to think of it, in a way she can, summons sense his intentions to follow silent commands.

"Being Epic Companions, or maybe your [Advisor] skill lets us operate fully autonomously. Laura can cast some healing magic, or she can trade the Ice Drakes for Woodland Drakes that can heal like a Druid, and my group heals are pretty good. I'm pretty sure the Oath Breakers can too, or anything you pick as a Legendary Golem." Vala finishes and Cain sinks into thought for a moment while Laura looks upset at the thought of changing her Drakes to be healers. She likes freezing everything.

"One moment while I call some summons, I think these ladies would like to do a separate instance instead of helping clear ours." Cain says, confusing the others. After all, those are clearly his Companions, and they've never seen Companion type summons do anything like that before.

"Hey again Oath Breaker. Can you join whatever group you want? The girls want to do two separate runs, and I was going to send you with them." The interface is not a big believer in giving useful information about skills, so in cases where the summons can talk, it's easier to simply ask them.

"We like that idea, three dungeons at once is the way of the future." The oath breaker agrees and Cain uses Lesser Demon Army to raise their numbers to twelve.

"We will do this differently today. Five each go with Vala's teams, which the Companions will form, two will come with me and we will try out the [Merger] skill and see what kind of increase that provides." Cain says and the fearsome demons split between the groups. Honestly, if Laura is using Drakes that can heal, their groups are likely going to be just as overpowered as his team even after the rest of his summons appear.

The two Oath Breakers staying behind come over to Cain, ready for the Merge.

[Merger complete]

[Skill Gained: Deadly Shadow] All attacks hit any or all targets in range of this skill.

So that's how they are killing everything without anyone noticing them? It's just a selective area attack skill. But they're insanely fast to begin with, so nobody could tell.

[Merger Complete]

[Multiple Mergers have reduced efficiency]

Not exactly a full and helpful description, but Cain will have to test it out when he's in the Raid.

"I'm ready, let's head out." Cain notices his voice has taken on the creepy tone of the Oath Breakers, and he moves to jog to the raid portal, finding himself there in mere seconds, with the group far behind. The physical benefit from Merge skill really is huge.

[We are powerful] comes a faint Oath Breaker voice in his head, followed by laughter.

The group catches up a minute later, looking at him in awe and Cain nods a greeting as if he meant to do that and enters the Raid to call the rest of his Summons.

The group follows behind him and Kone is stretching her limbs like something is off.

"What's up? You feeling alright?" Cain asks, worried about the little Beast Lord.

"When you merged something changed in the [Assigned Companion] skill. I think some of the bonus is based on your stats and the change made me a bit off balance, like everything is too easy." She tries to explain before giving up. Su, her leafy scaled dragon companion agrees with her though, flexing her muscles in appreciation.

Today's dungeon is one of the mind breaking ones Cain hates. The whole thing is warped and shifting colors like a hallucination, even the monsters in here look like they're straight out of a bad acid trip. But he gets a new Demon type on the very first pull, a large, feathered humanoid Demon with multi colored wings like a Parrot and two crow like heads. The Record Keeper as it's called is an incredible Mage, and an Epic Demon, flagged as having the increased durability of a boss monster.

A bona fide Raid Boss was stationed at the front doors. This run is going to suck. Cain begins to fire multi shot, finding it takes virtually no mana at all while merged, the blue globe in the bottom right of his interface doesn't even dip as he spams multi shot.

To his eyes the shots explode with a black Mist that covers dozens of meters in every direction, the [Deadly Shadow] skill effect, but there's nothing else to hit. Each arrow hits

significantly harder than a swing from the Oath Breakers Claws, taking chunks out of the Record Keeper's health a dozen times a second.

"Are we fighting this boss too, or just staring?" One of the tanks teases the group, finally getting into position as the Demon has lost a third of its health. Three seconds isn't a long time to recover from the shock and charge the boss, but at the rate Cain is firing Arrows, he was still almost too late and had to [Taunt] to get it to pay attention to him.

Even the Wrath Bringers were a step behind him, arriving as he was speaking to circle behind the boss and leave the front open to attacks.

A barrage of spells follows, and no other melee fighter manages to land a blow.

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

Chapter 147 - 147

Moving in from the entrance, the dungeon gets even more strange. Things that look solid aren't, and invisible walls are spread at random, turning a short walk into a long detour. Nobody likes this particular setup, but it's good experience, even without Cain here, as there are huge numbers of small misshapen demons through the entire labyrinth.

This is the first time Cain has encountered this type of demons since level 100, and almost all the demons are new forms to him. He gathered the new Wrath, Lust and Plague Demons already, but it looks like he's still going to fall way short of the thousand forms needed to make Vala Legendary.

They move forward, Cain holding himself to regular rate Arrow fire. As close as he can guess, it's about what he was doing before, plus one and a half times what an Oath Breaker does per hit. So he's getting about three quarters of the Demons power after the multiple Merge penalty.

He's also gained about the same percentage of their basic stats, and it's very clear in his summons. They're stronger, more durable, and much, much faster than usual. Their stats are based on his stats, so it does make sense, but seeing it in action is like they gained another rank, or he gained another thirty levels in an instant.

The raid this time spawned at level 112, higher than normal, but that made the Raid Group happy. The Demon Raid scales based on group level and power, making it useful all the way up to level 125 where it caps out. The fact they got it to scale halfway

cheers them up and gives them a sense of strength. A feeling they were missing for a long time, being trampled by Guild Master AllNatty and his goons.

They've stopped to carefully look around a corner and into a large chamber with pulsating blue walls and gold shag carpet on the floor, as they've come across a second Raid Boss now, that Cain might have called a Lamia, despite its six arms and wings, if it didn't have a scorpion Stinger at the end of its tail. They make a simple plan to get the Golems to turn it away a quarter turn so the Ranged members aren't directly in the path of the tail strikes and charge in to take it down.

Not only is this thing fast, and carrying four swords, it's casting spells at the same time. [Trance] to slow the group members, [Ice Block] to freeze them and [Chain Lightning] to deal damage.

It's every bit as fast as the Oath Breaker, who he can sense whistling in appreciation inside him, though the strikes don't hit as hard and only one target at a time, with the exception of her spells.

Cain's Arrows are doing a number on it as expected, but not what Cain had hoped for with [Might of Many] stacked up, plus with the spell damage it's doing they're still in danger of members getting one shot by Chain Lightning arcing back onto them a second time.

There is a possibility it is immune to certain debuffs, or has a cap on damage taken per hit. That would be an amazing ability to have, and Cain hopes the Oath Breaker will forgive him if he experiments with merging this creature, known as a Primordial Shaman, instead of, or even in addition to the Oath Breaker.

Cain would try it out right now, but with ten of the twelve Oath Breakers in other instances, he would be causing a huge problem for his friends.

They come very close to losing a member in the seconds before the boss dies, only a skill called [Final Redemption] saves him. It's a high level Paladin skill that prevents a killing blow from taking him below 1HP and gives them three seconds of limited immunity once per day. Just long enough for the healers to save him, and the Boss died in those three seconds.

Well that was brutal, even with the option to retreat, they almost lost a Paladin to that thing. If they were locked inside like when the Guardians faced the Oath Breaker, it might have been just Cain and Kone leaving alive. It said it was an Epic Quality Raid Boss, but that had to be the limits of what counts as Epic before you simply must call it Legendary.

Fortunately, that is the last Boss level monster they see before finishing the clear of the Raid. Nobody has any gear they want to trade today, so they exit and Cain finds a bench to wait for the other groups. Opening the summons portion of the group status of

his interface that he always keeps hidden, because of the amount of his vision it takes up, he sees that they're still in the instance.

He quickly hides it again, glad to have his sight back, and Kone returns with ice cream for him and Su. The others are back before they finish their snack, causing panic in the streets as a number of large demons appear in the town square. Cain dismisses the Oath Breakers and the area mostly clears of demons and the shopkeepers begin to calm down.

[Merged Summons cannot be dismissed]

That's interesting, he can have the Oath Breakers merged with him and still dismiss the others. But can he Summon a different Demon while merged with an Oath Breaker?

Cain runs over to the portal and steps inside the regular dungeon to test his theory, calling forth the Primordial Shaman. Only two appear, and he's still merged with the Oath Breaker.

He ends the Merger skill, causing the Oath Breakers to appear in front of him, and uses Lesser Demon Army to bring him up to six of each Demon. Then he merges with them all.

[Merger Complete]

[Primordial Demonic Spell Book] gained

[Skill: Deadly Shadow] gained

[Multiple Mergers have reduced efficiency]

[Merger Efficiency reduced beyond ten instances]

Well that answers all the basic questions. Well, all but how powerful is he?

Cain releases one of each Legendary Demon from the Merger to bring him back to ten, where the system said he wouldn't suffer the additional penalty, and looks for a target. Perfect, a group of Epic Plague Demons. Very durable, and ideal for this test.

Cain fires an arrow at them, hitting one and causing the flash of black Mist to spread as far as he can see in this cityscape, so at least a city block. The entire group is dead and the Oath Breaker not merged with him is laughing.

"It's three quarters of the stats and damage up to ten. The area damage also increases in size with increased copies of me." The six armed Demon informs him, looking at the carnage wrought by that single skill.

That's enough experimenting for today, dinner is coming soon, so Cain dismisses all but one copy of the Oath Breaker and the Primordial Shaman that he keeps merged with himself. The extra strength and speed is incredible, plus he can now use Trance, Ice Block, Chain Lightning and Fireball.

"How did it go? Can you fight solo now?" Kone teases and Vala laughs.

"Like you wouldn't believe. With this one Simple Trick, I can even Summon two different Legendary Demons, letting me gain both the speed and attacks of the Oath Breaker, and the Spells of the Primordial Shaman at the same time."

"If it's a Shaman, can it use Totems?" Kone asks and Cain mentally flips through the spell book.

"Totem of Fire, Totem of Ice, Totem of Lightning and a Mana Totem. I guess the Primordial Shaman is more focused than most." Cain shrugs. The totems aren't even a buff to his abilities, they actually use their stated element against approaching enemies. That's pretty useful, he could set sentries if they're traveling.

They retire back to the Guild House for the evening and find the entire guild, including hired staff, have gathered to visit for a group meal. The first group meal in what feels like forever. The Ogres have been mostly suppressed and the Alliance forces have sent the volunteer transfers home, finishing up with just their dedicated armies. A celebration feast is certainly in order, and they've brought the good booze.

They used to do this at the buffet in the tavern all the time, and Cain kind of misses it. He should see if he can return through the portal between houses without completing the quest first.

There are a number of lower level new members to meet, and they've brought new foods with them. Personal favorites for everyone to try, a welcoming ritual of sorts.

The discussion is mostly about dungeons, and how the Companions can do their own, which leads Cain to look through his inventory and find only one run worth of items. Three was enough to pack his inventory full before.

"Looks like we miss out on the drops though. I only got them from the one I was in." Cain says and Laura grins at him before slapping a book in the table.

[Book of Cleave] Rank B. Usable by Warrior, Rogue, Hunter, Ranger

"We got them all for you. When we entered the Raid instance it opened up an inventory screen for us Companions and gear just started filling it up. It's only thirty spots each though, and clones share, so it fills up really fast."

That's pretty awesome. They're almost actual transfers now, just a bit limited.

"You can put what you don't want in the Guild Bank, if you can access it. I wonder if you can use skill books?" Misha thinks out loud.

[Invalid Target]

"Nope, can't use the skill book." Vala says and Laura grabs the book protectively away from the Demon.

"You've already got Cleave though, and so does Laura. Do we have any other ability book we could test with?" Nobody has one with them, so the question goes unanswered for now.

It's been a long and eventful day, and Cain is exceedingly drunk and happy to settle into bed, joined by Misha, who securely locks the door behind her, muttering about thieving cats, which makes Cain wonder if Nemu has been hiding her stuff.. He'll have to talk to the Felian in the morning if he remembers.

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

Chapter 148 - 148

Cain is woken up by a notification.

[Remote use of Summon Epic Demon is requested] Y/N

Half awake he simply agrees and wraps Misha in his arms to get a few more minutes sleep. That's all he manages because his brain starts waking up and realizes what the interface just asked him.

Who wanted the Oath Breakers, and where did they Summon them to?

Reluctantly, he gets up and gets dressed, a heavier than usual outfit, even putting on his coat to go outside because Montauk seems to be significantly cooler than the warm forge air he's become used to in Graska, or the almost tropical forest environment of Sunnybrook. Looking out the front window as he heads for the stairs and finds a large number of people are in the street out front, in the street between the Guild House and Martha's.

The group finder is doing a brisk trade, and Cain realizes he never did put out a raid sheet, or check on the group from last night who he promised to send summons to assist. Some responsible City Councilor he is.

Breakfast is the most important thing, so Cain heads down to the kitchen, finding it empty. There definitely were people here though, because there is still warm breakfast food on the stove. Cain grabs a stack of pancakes and bacon to fuel himself up while making plans and mentally preparing himself to face the day and not simply go back to bed, as good as that doubts right now.

Stepping out onto the front porch, he finds Kone in the street out front with Martha, helping wrangle transfers into organized parties. They're doing a pretty efficient job, calling names five at a time to gather an assigned group and the crowd is slowly clearing.

"Hey Martha, sorry for forgetting about the groups last night, nobody was out front when I got home and it slipped my mind." Cain apologized when he reached the old woman.

"No troubles dear, they found a pair of healers just after you left and went as a raid group." Well that's a relief, he didn't just leave them hanging.

"How is the group finder going? Looks like you'll need a full time assistant."

"I've got one coming for tomorrow, my granddaughter is available, but she was out of town this morning, looking for herbs. The shop sold out of something she wanted to use for our dinner tonight, but if I knew it would be this busy I'd have kept her here and sent someone else."

The transfers gathered around all laugh at her explanation as they mill about waiting for their group to be called. Martha and Kone sent out the partially arranged parties first, as they were easiest to fill. So what remains are the less frequent dungeon explorers or the lower geared ones that always get picked last.

"Have you seen Vala? Or even Nemu or Laura?" Cain asks Kone.

"They went to the dungeon. Something about finding more books for the library." Kone shrugs, sorting party applications.

Cain reluctantly opens his summons list again, information filling his line of sight. They are indeed in the Demon Raid, in two separate parties, and they've got the Oath Breakers with them. Cain isn't sure when they gained the ability to request a Summon be cast at their location, but they seem to be enjoying themselves. Plus, he's getting a huge amount of experience.

He must have leveled up while he was sleeping, because he's now level 102 and it's steadily climbing.

The crowd is almost cleared now and Martha sends Kone home, saying she's got the rest. Kone smiles back at the kind old pawnshop owner as they head back inside, finding everyone returned and the whole Guild discussing what they'll do today. Most want to return to their crafting, while others want to explore the city before heading home. The hangovers have determined that nobody wants to actually do any work today.

First on Cain's to do list is heading back to Graska, to see if the portal can be used without completing the quest first. The transfer is smooth, but Cain gets a handful of notifications when he steps out.

[Entering Restricted Area]

[Strength limited to level 99]

[Some items may become unusable in this zone]

So he can easily access the Beginner's Valley, but he still doesn't get around the essential restrictions that make it the Beginner's Zone.

Cain briefly wonders if that was something determined by the system, or if it was cast by a high level mage type some time in the past.

Good news now secured, Cain returns with a smile, letting everyone know that even if they level out of the valley, their homes are secure and they can just go back through the Guild House Portal. That's a massive relief to them all, especially those getting close to the cap who have loyal customers for their products back in the valley.

The City Council arrives while they're all discussing their plans for the day, intending to spend much of the day meeting, as they want to build a new tax structure, reform infrastructure and set up new city services. As usual they have decided to meet at the Darklight Host Guild House, largely out of habit ingrained in them during the previous Guild's reign.

To start, they need to decide what the revenue source should be. The actual amount needed is surprisingly low in Cain's mind, the city doesn't really maintain or provide much. They don't even have a city guard to do law enforcement. That's going to have to change eventually, unless they're going to continue to let a Guild rule them.

The decision is that they should have 30 guards total, which seems low, but the city doesn't really have a crime problem. They look over what everyone has been paying already and realize that it's way more than what they're spending, because AllNatty was skimming off the top. They cut the tax for shops in half, cut the tax per house in half and leave the trade tariff alone. That brings them to about twice what they're currently spending.

The maintenance group is doing a fine job, so that remains unchanged. A small fee is agreed to pay Martha and her assistants to run the Party Finder. Then they're basically out of ideas. The place is getting cleaned and fixed, what more could people want, right?

After looking through the suggestions citizens have left, the answer is apparently "A Lot".

Everything from a weekly grocery allowance, city funds for residents to go on vacation, city run daycares to go with the existing city run schools, Universal income so everyone would get a wage whether they worked or not. The list is endless and endlessly expensive.

One they do decide to add, in reflection of their old worlds, is a City fund to hire a couple Clerics. They can do weddings and heal those who need it. In a city full of adventurers a full on hospital isn't really a necessity, but having a Healer who will be in a set location, next to the apothecary, is bound to come in useful. Not everything can be cured with a healing spell, but nobody is perfect.

A whole day was spent, and in the end it feels like they only agreed to stop gouging people and hire a couple city workers. Still, they post the announcement all over town, and set the changes in the Mayor's city controls. It's actually a physical object in the City Hall that people can go see, but only the one declared as Mayor can change the settings.

If you have an interface, the taxes will come out automatically. If you don't, the city treasurer will come around to collect once a month. Everybody hates the unfortunate guy for his job, but they never did give him too much trouble. Hopefully that continues.

With that out of the way, Cain starts to wonder just exactly where all his companions went.

Seriously, it's been all day. They usually finish a Raid in two hours or less unless it's particularly long. The interface shows they're still in the dungeon though, and he hasn't gotten any mental communications from them, or seen any of them die, so they must still be busy. Likely they went in more than once, trying to get a book to test the theory on.

Or simply competing with their clones. That possibility can't be ruled out.

Cain returns to Graska that night to sleep in his old bed and enjoy the meaty goodness of Dwarven cuisine, and it's not until the small hours of the morning when he finally gets a mental communication from Laura wondering where he is.

They bought cake from a late night vendor and left some in the ice box for him in Montauk. They're headed back to the raid again, because they're tied at two points

each. She doesn't elaborate on the scoring system, but it's enough to at least know what they're up to.

They're not the only ones up late that night, after finding out that Cain will be sleeping in Graska tonight, Lickity and Cixelcid commandeer Cain's room in Montauk to make use of some of the more 'specialized' features, bringing the furniture Misha removed with them.

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

Chapter 149 - 149

The next morning brings a major change of pace for Cain and the Guild. Some of the deserters decided they would get revenge on the Guild who ruined the good thing they had going in the Exit City, and they have managed to gather a small army of Lizardmen to help them.

According to the Mayor, the Lizardmen are roaming monsters frequently found in the desert north and east of the city, and with a little help from some lizard type Beastkin living in the area they can be hired as mercenaries. How much it would cost to hire enough of them to threaten the city is a question Cain would rather not consider, but the mayor does seem concerned.

They haven't started to recruit guards for the city yet, and the transfers and others with an interface living here are still mostly under geared. Not a great combination for the guy whose job it is to see everyone survives and prospers.

[There is a large band of Lizardmen mercenaries approaching Montauk now, who is up for a fight?] Cain sends in Guild chat.

Most of the higher level members answer in a positive way, but Elmira is a ways from Sunnybrook and would need to fly back, while Cixelcid and Lickity don't answer at all, probably still asleep.

That's close enough for Cain, so he informs his companions to finish up whatever they're doing and meet the Guild by the north gates. He's not overly concerned if they're a bit late, there's plenty of summons available still, and Cain has remained merged with an Oath Breaker and a Primordial Shaman, the extended use of the skill not seeking to have any sort of negative consequences other than an increased appetite and

infrequent strange suggestions being whispered into his mind from the merged demons.

If they weren't so strong, Cain definitely would have picked a pair that couldn't speak.

The Oath Breaker is predictable, it keeps suggesting killing anything it finds annoying. But the Primordial Shaman is much more creative. It's fond of highly lethal 'practical jokes' and curvaceous women. Tuning that Demon out is a necessity, or the graphic descriptions it provides to accompany its suggestions just might make him do something he would regret.

But Cain now understands where the negative myths about Demon possessed people came from in his past life. Vala is pretty mellow, but these two should not be left unattended.

The City Council has amassed a small army by the gate before the members of the Darklight Host begin to filter into the area. A quest has been set with a pretty reasonable bounty, and it's drawn enough transfers out to fill at least two Raid Groups. No battle plan has been decided yet, they're waiting on the scouts that have gone out to verify the position of the enemy forces.

It's been quite a while though, and some are starting to suspect that the ones who volunteered as scouts were in fact informants for the deserters. They've sent a number of trusted fighters out to the corners of the city to report back if they see anything approaching, just in case, but nothing has been seen. Su has volunteered to take a look as well, flying out over the desert in search of the elusive Lizardmen force.

If the source wasn't declared as reliable by the mayor, Cain would think they've been pranked, with the continued inability to find any sign of the enemy.

Both teams of companions arrive together, joking about being tied again in their book collection, just before Su reports back that she's found the attackers.

"I found them. Hey, they're throwing stuff at me. Ow, stop that. Fine, take that! How do you like that Dragon Breath you big dumb dumb." Su seems to have grasped the essentials of the chat system, which shows up as being sent by [Kone:Su] but still sees messages as a stream of free flow consciousness, making all the members of her raid team burst into laughter.

"She's a Healer type, and she's starting to take damage, so we should likely go rescue the Dragon." Kone laughs as Su sends another stream of expletives about the ancestry of her targets.

"Your mother was an iguana, you spell tossing bully." Comes up in the chat and Kone leads the party out of the gates towards the location where Su is fighting.

Cain calls all of his Summons, the Lamia grabbing a Guild member each and slithering off through the sand at incredible speed.

Being upgraded to Greater Golems made them much larger, and with the two Legendary Demons merged with Cain, their agility and movement speed have skyrocketed.

"There, just over that rise. I can see Su's wings." Kone announces pointing off in the distance. All of the Dragons surge ahead, the Drakes momentarily vanishing as Laura switches the Woodland Drakes they were using as healers for Ice Drakes.

"They're cold blooded right?" Is the last thing Cain hears her shout as she disappears into the distance. He likely should have caught a ride, but they'll be arriving soon enough at the rate they're moving.

As the raid party approaches the hill they realize it's a trap. The Lizardmen and deserters always intended to lure them out of the city into an ambush. Only the ambush failed when Su simply flew over top of their well laid traps and hidden positions. Instead they were left scrambling to recover as first one, then a whole flight of Dragons appeared in their camp while the raid party carefully made their way through the sand dunes.

From the sounds of the screaming and cursing, it's going well for the Dragons. It's hard to tell what the hissing means though. It could be the Dragons, or it could be the Lizardmen.

"Don't break the popsicle, I'm going to eat that one later." The group hears Laura yell before a large crash.

"Didn't I just say don't break that one? Fine, I'll make another."

The Dragons are winning that battle for certain.

Cain tops the rise first, being the fastest moving of the humans, and not particularly concerned about the traps the Lizardmen laid. The fight isn't as one sided as it sounded, the Dragons are circling a magical barrier that keeps getting broken and remade, trying to kill the occupants but not get caught inside when it goes back up.

They've gotten quite a few that way, clawing their way through the barrier and then coating the area in Dragon Breath. But the Mercenaries are experienced, hiding under shelters to get away from the ice and coming back out to attack when they get the chance.

Looking down at the numbers, the mercenaries might outnumber the entire city's population. However they did it, the deserters have amassed a huge force.

"I feel like chicken tonight, like chicken tonight." Laura sings with her mouth full as she takes a bite out of an unlucky human mage who was caught in the open after his shelter was destroyed. That must have been one of the deserters.

"Take some of the deserters alive. The city will want to hold a nice trial for them." Cain shouts to Laura once he sees that the rest of the raid team is in position. The second team will be holding the city walls in case this isn't the only force they have brought.

"Bastards, where did you get more Dragons?" Someone shouts from down in the mercenary camp.

"Oh, I've got a lot more than Dragons. Oath Breakers, bring me a couple of hostages." Cain calls, loud enough for the camp to hear him.

The six armed demons were hanging back a ways, out of sight of the Lizardmen, and they rush forward at the chance to have some fun.

The Lizardmen are having none of it though, turning on their employers and forcing them to their knees before the demons have even made it through the barrier. With their combined attack power it only takes a moment for the five of them to get through, clearly disappointed at the ease with which they've obtained the prisoners.

"We wish for parlay." Hisses the largest of the Lizardmen, a sandy yellow specimen with green eyes.

"Speak then. What do you propose." Cain calls back as the Oath Breakers secure their prisoners with rope and then chain over the rope, before stuffing them in burlap sacks they found in the camp.

"We will return half the fee and call our contract complete. The mission has failed and we wish to leave." The mercenary leader proposes.

They didn't actually kill anyone, and their employers are captured, so Cain is feeling generous. Laura looks like she'd rather eat them all though.

"Return all the fee to me and leave with any other forces you have sent out. I'll give you Two hours to disappear into the desert." Cain counters and the lizards look at each other, thinking over the offer.

"Four hours and we keep a quarter of the fee." The leader states his terms and a Paladin nods that Cain should accept. He likely knows better than any of the newly arrived members of the Darklight Host how such negotiations usually go, so Cain is ready to accept.

"Four hours to leave, you keep a quarter of the fee and we keep your employers. Agreed?"

The Lizardman gives him a fist to chest salute and steps away from the sacks of prisoner before making a circling gesture overhead and a large number of hidden warriors emerge from the sand to disappear over the dunes headed away from the city.

That's the thing about mercenaries, they've got nothing keeping them around except the money.. If you've clearly lost they're not going to remain and die with you.

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

Chapter 150 - 150

The Oath Breakers drag the prisoners in their burlap sacks all the way back to town, not picking them up even when they cross the small oasis ponds that line the edge of the city, causing the captured to splutter and swear as they're unexpectedly dunked and then dragged through the brush and onto the road.

"The mercenaries surrendered and were given terms. They turned over their employers to our custody." Cain smiles at the Mayor, pointing to the burlap sacks.

One of the bags suddenly bursts into flames, its former occupant leaping to his feet and beginning to cast a spell in his desperate bid to escape before being knocked unconscious by the flat of an axe to the back of the head, courtesy of a nearby Dwarven warrior. The Oath Breaker ties him up again, this time using a warriors chain flail before grabbing another sack from a nearby fruit cart, dumping the former contents into the cart itself.

The annoyed look it is giving the prisoner is making the crowd laugh before they stifle themselves, not wanting to laugh at a condemned man. It's pretty clear to everyone that these prisoners will have one of two fates, either lifetime imprisonment for raising an army and attacking the city or public execution.

The mercenaries from the desert have caught the interest of Kone and Misha though. Not because they're interested in learning more about the Lizardmen, but the notion of traveling to more new places intrigues them both. Across this desert there's supposed to be an ocean, with multiple large modernized cities and fresh seafood. According to the locals, they're known as First Advancement cities, so between level 100 and 200. After level 200, all transfers should have had the chance to upgrade classes at least once, so that's the informal division between first and second advancement.

Once you get into higher level cities than that, you'll start seeing much more advanced classes for pretty much every transfer, and almost all of the citizens born in a second advancement area will be born with an interface. That's also where the more obscure and powerful races start becoming common. With the second class change, transfers who meet the prerequisites will have the option to change their character race. It's uncommon, but some human Druids will become Beastkin or Fae species, and the occasional special case will find a way to become what they want.

But mostly the races you meet that one can't directly pick in the character creation screen are born here on this planet.

"What do you think of going to the ocean? We could expand our guild house network and buy a vacation home?" Misha asks, hitting Cain right where he's softest, in the urge to lay around and relax. Even with all the effort he's put into becoming a better person, the idea of laying on the beach all day is still insanely attractive.

"We could give it a few days to prepare for a long desert journey, then go. I asked the trade manager and he said it takes two weeks by camel caravan, and he even gave me a route map with directions to the closest ocean front city." Kone adds.

"Alright, but we've got to get Misha through her first advancement before we leave. The power jump can be huge, plus it unlocks a bunch of new crafting related skills." Cain agrees. They're just preaching to the choir at this point, Cain wants to go too. But he's practical enough to at least plan for the essentials.

His plan is simple, Vala, Laura and Nemu have an ongoing contest to see who gets more books, so he'll encourage them to keep going for now, while Misha and Kone are in a party with him and head to the dungeon to get Misha to level 100. He's not sure if being in a party with him will grant the others experience from the independent adventures of the Companions, but if it does, this will be very quick. If it doesn't, they might have to lead a couple groups through the raid before they go.

To test the theory, Vala leads the groups out for an overnight attempt to take a definitive lead while Cain, Kone and Misha are grouped with the originals. At the least this might give them all experience from one of the teams, despite not being in the dungeon. Fifteen minutes later the answer is clear, only Cain is gaining experience from this. The others are out of range and are gaining nothing.

So, they decide to change the plan. They'll lead a group into the raid in the morning and get the needed levels. Misha is almost level 98 now, so it shouldn't be too horrible to get her up to level 100.

Waking up early Cain finds a very smug looking Vala sitting at the table, sipping coffee and humming a happy song about overcoming your limits.

"I take it the winner of the library competition has been decided?" Cain tries to hide his amusement, for the sake of her twin.

"We found a Demon library on our last run. Seven F and D ranked books in a single go. Nothing overwhelming in power, but the library is well stocked now. As the losing side of the wager, the other team is making copies of every skill book we collected over the course of the competition. With the help of an Inscriptionist of course, or they'd be totally worthless."

"Well then I should go see how they're doing. If there's anything useful to me I'll get an extra copy made."

Cain heads for the library with Vala, coffee in hand, to see how the work is coming along. As it turns out, the library they raided was a Lust Demon facility, and almost all the low rank skills are little better than seduction and hypnosis techniques. They do have a few that look useful though.

[Pacify] Rank D. Not usable by Berserker. Calms target on contact. Usable by touch or non damaging object.

[Warming Hug] Rank F. Usable by all species with arms. Negates [Chill] and [Freeze] effects on prolonged contact.

The rest Cain decides to pass on, though they'll have a duplicate hard copy in the library for later.

"I get Pacify, but why Warming Hug? We've got lots of cleanse effects." Vala asks in confusion.

"I'll show you once we get the extra copy made. Trust me, it's a valuable skill to have."

Even the Inscriptionist looks baffled as to why a transfer of his level and talents would want such a skill, but he makes the copy in under a minute, the book being more accurately called a leaflet, as it is only three pages long. The copy he makes for Cain's use isn't even bound, there's just a staple at either corner of the spine and a hastily scrawled name on the cover.

Cain quickly uses the skill book and calls for Kone.

"Come quick, I've got a skill to test out."

She jogs into the room with a big smile "You found something good in the books? What is it? Let me see."

Cain grabs her and activates the Warming Hug skill.

"Oh yeah, this is it, definitely the best skill of the bunch." Kone sighs, making everyone in the room snicker.

"You got a new skill? What is it?" Lickity asks, and receives a hug of her own.

"Oh, I know this one, Warming Hug. That skill is amazing, even if it doesn't actually work very well at removing freeze effects. You have to Hug them for like twenty seconds before they thaw."

"You guys are great, totally made my day. I think I'm going to make myself a copy of that book." The Inscriptionist laughs, putting pen to paper again.

The Inscription skill looks like something Cain might actually be good at. His handwriting was always very precise, and writing out skills and such doesn't seem like it would be too terrible of a profession.

"How hard is it to become an Inscriptionist? Is there a guidebook or base skill training or something?" Cain asks, watching the man work.

"There's a base skill book that grants you apprentice rank and the ability to copy F ranked skill books. You can copy out spell scrolls too once you get a few levels, but only for spells that you know or have a copy of in front of you."

That isn't a problem for Cain, he can just merge with a Summon that knows the spell he needs. Hopefully.

"Where might I find this basic skill book?"

At his prompt the Inscriptionist pulls one from his inventory. "Remember, you can only have two trade professions active at a time. If you've got another it is best to pick one that compliments it, like skinning or weaving to go with Tailoring. Understand?"

"I actually never learned a profession. Everyone around me had all the ones we needed covered, so I just supplied the materials." Cain shrugs and takes the training book.

"I'll just put it on your tab. Fourteen total books so far, mostly Rank F and D, but that Cleave book is a good one, and there was a [Razor Grass] book as well." That's almost painful to hear. Two high ranked spell books, and both are useless to them because the members that can use them already know them. But they'll have an extra copy for later, in case an up and coming member needs a new spell.

Cain decides that will be his job now, to get good enough to copy all the spell books they get, so the Guild always has a copy to duplicate later. He activates the 'Training Manual For Inscriptionist' as it's officially known, and finds that there is a bit more to it than just good penmanship. The inks are a blend of crushed gems and herbs that have to match the book or spell, more so at higher levels, as the F Ranked books mostly just

need Metallic ink and sometimes a bit of blood or an Elemental aligned plant base. It's all things he's seen growing abundantly in the wild and in the dungeons, in fact, they've got a lot of the necessary materials up to Rank B in the Guild Bank, because nobody was using them and they don't often sell crafting materials.

That's a ways off though, first, he's got to get this skill up from Apprentice to Novice to start doing D ranked books.. A task to pass the time while they're traveling.

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