

Dimension Master

Chapter 26: 26: Decision to Help

Drake opened the door of the tavern. Gavin was at the bar in his usual spot, drinking out of his stein. He turned toward the door and nodded at Drake before turning back to his drink, unbothered by the impending attack on the town by the monsters. His attitude towards Drake had changed since his debt was paid.

Mayor Ivan was standing over his map. He and the captain of the town guard were pointing at the map animatedly, discussing ways to protect the town from another attack by the monsters. The table was surrounded by the soldiers working under the town captain. They looked up as Drake and his friends walked in. There was a question in their eyes. They wanted to know if the barrier had been dealt with.

Drake led his friends to the large table, stopping next to Mayor Ivan. "The barrier is down." He informed them, answering their silent question. His tone was calm, unwavering. In the short couple of days they had been inside the game-like dimension, Drake had changed considerably. He wasn't the quiet, reclusive gamer any longer. He had become a leader. It helped that he had gained power, but what really changed him was a purpose: The purpose of saving the little girl Nelly, and then the small town of Draco.

As time passed, he felt his connection to the dimension grow. It was as if it were becoming a part of him. He wanted to help and protect them. Right now, they needed protection. His quest would have to wait.

Chad and Mike stood silently flanking Drake on either side. Neither boy said anything.

Drake folded his arms across his chest. "What do you need us to do. I may not possess the power of the Dimension Master, being only an heir, but my friends and I can still help."

Drake quickly looked back at his friends. He hadn't even spoken to his friends about staying in town to continue to help. He knew they wanted to get home. So did he, but it felt more important to help these people.

Chad and Mike just nodded in agreement. Neither of the boys protested, nor did they appear as if they didn't want to help. Whatever Drake decided, they would follow.

Mayor Ivan looked relieved. "We took a census of the town while you were dealing with the barrier. A new roster has been made. No one was taken during the last battle. We lost several soldiers but no civilians."

Drake nodded, taking in what the mayor was saying, then he spoke. "Make sure that if anyone finds any object. Especially if it has runes or symbols on it, to bring it to me. The monster's shaman might try something else. He had planted a totem. It was a little leather bag filled with items. Nelly had found it. It has since been destroyed. However, that doesn't mean there aren't more items planted around the town."

Ivan nodded as he tugged his scruffy beard. It was clear this bit of information troubled him. He didn't like having magical objects planted around the town for his people to find. It was dangerous. "We will keep a lookout. Currently, we plan to use the same strategy as before. It worked well. In the meantime, we're going to upgrade the locks and window shutters to help protect the homes. We shouldn't have to hide every night in the cellar."

"I would advise hiding in the cellars if the alarm bells are rung. Other than that, I would keep the cellars prepared in the event that hiding for a few hours turns into days. I doubt it would come to that, but it's better to be safe than sorry, as the saying goes." Drake suggested. He knew it would make the lives of the people miserable if they had to hide in their cellars every night. They needed a normal life, not one of fear. "My friends and I are going to scout out around the town. When we're finished, we'll come back here. It shouldn't take that long."

Ivan nodded as Drake turned and headed toward the door. Chad and Mike followed behind him. As soon as the tavern door closed behind him, Drake turned to his friends. "I'm sorry I didn't discuss it with you. It was a spur-of-the-moment decision, so there was no time. I know you guys want to get back home, but these people need our help."

Mike shrugged. "I don't mind. I have a feeling the road we're going to travel to complete the quest is going to be difficult. The longer we have to get stronger and gain more weapons and experience, the easier it will be to complete the quest."

Chad nodded in agreement. "I don't mind either. I agree with Mike. I do have a specific worry thought..." he started. He paused as if trying to word what he was thinking.

Mike and Drake looked at Chad, waiting for him to continue.

"Well," Chad stated. "The red thread you were following disappeared. I'm wondering if something happened to the enchanter...or shaman...or whatever they are called. We also know that it was someone else who placed the barrier. It coincided with the erasing spell the enchanter placed. It makes me wonder if someone was helping the enchanter prevent you from stopping his spell. Obviously, it didn't work. My worry, though, is that we seem to have more than one person after us. I don't think the Dimension Master was the one who made the barrier. We're on a quest that he gave us. Why would he trap us in town if he needed us to complete the quest? That means we have more than one enemy."

Drake sighed. "I'm pretty sure we have more than two. First off, we have the gargoyle shaman, then we have whoever placed the barrier. I also think adding the gargoyle leader or king, whatever they call him, because we took his prey from him when we took Nelly, and I killed the bandit. At minimum, we have three enemies. I would go as far as to say that we have more enemies than we may not even know about."

Mike pulled his storm sword from its sheath. "Let's scout around the town and figure out what the heck is going on around here. If someone is doing this to stop us from completing the quest and going home, I will turn the bastards into light particles," he seethed. Mike wanted to get home, but he was in complete agreement with Drake that they needed to help the people of Draco town. He was just frustrated because he wanted to get on with the quest. It felt like the dimension itself was trying to stop them from completing their goal.

Chad pulled his bow from his back as they headed toward the outskirts of town. They were heading toward the exit of the town that led to Dragon Head Mountain. Their plan was to walk the perimeter of the town to see if they could find any clues. Just as they started walking, a loud voice was heard from behind them.

"I'm coming with you," Gavin called. He had a pair of axes on his back.

As the boys waited for Gavin to approach, Mike whispered. "Do you think he's one of them?"

Drake discreetly shook his head. "I don't think so. We can keep an eye out, though, just in case I'm wrong."

Gavin stopped in front of Drake, giving a quick bow. "I want to help you," he stated.

Shrugging, Drake started walking again with his friends at his heels. As the four walked through the barrier of the small town, Gavin caught up to Drake.

"Something is going on around here," he stated. "I can feel it."

Drake nodded, not saying anything.

Sighing, Gavin continued. "I know you're on a quest to take over for the current Dimension Master. The only problem we've had has been the monsters coming at night. Everything has changed since you got here. I think someone is trying to stop you."

Drake turned to the large man. "Who told the mayor that I was coming for my quest?"

Gavin chuckled. "That was the Dimension Master. One day, he came here and called a meeting with the townsfolk. He gave us explicit instructions," he stopped. "Before you ask, we are forbidden to tell you more about the Dimension Master. He did say, though, that you were starting your quest and that he had a room ready for you and your cohort

because you would arrive late. I don't think he expected someone to try to interfere with your quest."

"When you incurred your debt to Drake, then how did you not know who you were speaking to if you were all told we were coming?" Chad asked, suspicion in his tone.

"I wasn't really paying attention to who I was talking to, just what was being said. I didn't realize who until after the fact," Gavin confessed.

Mike chuckled. "I bet you won't make that mistake again, will you?"

Gavin shrugged. He didn't have time to say anything because just then, glowing orange eyes charged out of the forest as a menacing growl followed.

Chapter 27: 27: Level 2 Beast

The glowing orange eyes flashed out of the darkness of the surrounding trees, with a menacing growl from its fanged maw. As it leaped high in the air, aiming for Drake, the beast was finally revealed. The beast was a wolf-type beast like all the others they had fought so far in this dimension, although this one was much larger.

Unlike the other wolf beasts they had fought, this one had long fangs protruding from its large maw. The long fangs of a sabretooth wolf dripped with orange saliva that glowed. As the bright orange saliva hit the ground, a sizzling sound erupted, smoke rising where it had landed as if it had burned the ground.

Instead of the yellow sprays of light on the fir, this one had orange patches that flickered like flames, making the beast appear as if it were on fire. Veins of orange were scattered on its fur, like veins of lava. It looked like the beast would be at home in the heart of a volcano or hell world of lava and brimstone.

Its claws were long and sharp, creating massive jagged talons. Spiderwebs of orange glowed on the claw's shiny surface, looking like veins of orange lava that flickered as if alive.

The beast growled, the sound making the very air vibrate. It lunged toward Drake. Its massive jaw was open wide, ready to bite down on its prey. Drake was the usual target. It had been like that from the start. Slashing his whip out with great force, the thin blade sliced through the fur of its large snout. A thin line of blood seeped through the midnight fur, disrupting the small patch of glowing orange. There was only enough damage to piss the beast off, but nothing more. The beast growled as its large taloned paws pounded into the ground as it landed.

"This one is mine!" Drake sneered. His eyes did not waver from the beast in front of him. The beast lowered its large head; its eyes locked on Drake. He could tell that the

beast was much more powerful than the others he had fought. He wanted to be the one to take it down.

The beast had landed behind them, turning abruptly. The group turned to face it, fearful of being attacked from behind. Their weapons held firmly, ready to defend their friend.

Gavin's face was pale as he looked at the large beast. He held an ax in each hand with his grip tight enough to turn his knuckles white. He watched the beast with fearful eyes. He fought beasts from time to time, but never one this large or powerful. It didn't belong here. Not this close to town.

Chad had his bow held up, ready to shoot. There was a white energy arrow notched, held aimed at the large beast. Mike had his sword tightly in his grip, ready to back up his friend. The faint glow of the power in the sword pulsed like a heartbeat, growing faster as if in anticipation of an upcoming fight. The sword would be disappointed because there would be no fight today.

The beast circled the group, its glowing orange eyes narrowed hungrily, the flames beneath their surface flickering as they fixed on Drake. Drake grinned. It was a wicked grin.

With his whip in one hand and the other hand held out, a whirlwind formed, a ball of fire at its core. The flaming wind shot out, flying with blurring speed through the air, hitting the beast. It exploded in a burst of fire, bursting in all directions with a loud bang.

The beast roared in anger, unharmed. The explosion was just a nuisance. The spell was too weak to do any harm.

Before the beast could retaliate, Drake held his hand out and cast another spell. As he did, a bright green energy beam left his hand. It slammed into the beast in one of its eyes. Drake was aiming for a weak spot. The eyes were the weakest spot he knew of. The beast roared in pain. The sound made the rocks at their feet vibrate. When the bright, green light of the beam faded, the beast was missing an eye. Black blood dripped from the burnt, empty socket. The beast snarled. Acidic saliva dripped onto the ground. Swirls of smoke rising where it had landed.

Without a pause, Drake shot his whip out in a wide arc. The thin blade at its tip began to glow as it soared through the air. A translucent green blade separated from the whip's tip, hitting the beast, slicing a thin line on its wide face. The sharp metallic edge of the whip sliced seconds later, slicing in the same spot, making the wound deeper. Blood dripped from the gash.

The beast flinched back, howling in pain. It bent down low and growled, ready to pounce, its remaining eye blazing, the flicker of orange flame in its depths. Drake gave the beast no time to attack. As it lowered down and prepared to leap, Drake shot his whip out. It soared through the air gracefully. The entire length of the whip began to

glow a bright green before it released the energy, separating the glow from the whip. The phantom whip slashed forward, slicing at the beast's neck. The metallic metal edge quickly followed, slicing a bit deeper. It only cut halfway, but it was enough.

The beast stumbled, then fell backward, exploding into a cloud of light particles. The familiar soft voice floated through Drake's mind, making him grin.

{You have slain a Level 2 beast}

{You have gained a reward}

{You have gained the Emerald Sword}

Drake stared at the spot where the beast once was. His thoughts moved to his very last strike. The strike was powerful. He stood in silence, thinking about what had happened, how he was able to make his whip do what it had done. He was hit with a revelation. He had imagined the phantom whip, and it materialized. He wondered what else he could create with his whip. His first thoughts had been that he had never done that with his whip before. It was a skill he didn't know the whip had. Then, he had realized, it wasn't really a skill. Using the energy of the whip, he could do anything as long as he imagined it. It wasn't really the whip's skill; it was his. His smile widened.

Turning to his friends, he made sure no one had been injured. Everyone was fine. Sighing, Drake coiled his whip around his wrist and then walked to the spot where the sword lay. He picked it up off the ground and studied it. It was a beautiful silver with a slight emerald green shine. It had lines of swirling runes etched in emerald green along the elegant blade. The runes matched his robes with perfection. The hilt was emerald green. It was a one-handed short sword. Letting it rest in his hand, energy pulsed through it and into him. The blade began to glow a soft green, making Drake smile. He knew right away that the beautiful blade was meant for him. He couldn't give it away. He wanted Chad to have a sword, but he couldn't give it to him.

He looked over at his friends, who were watching him. Gavin was the only one not paying attention. "I think the next beast we encounter should be yours. We can back you up. You need to make the killing blow," he told Chad. He then looked at Mike. "He needs a melee weapon, but this one is meant for me. I can feel it."

Mike nodded in understanding; it was obvious by its appearance. There was no way to dispute it.

Gavin was standing still, as he looked at the spot where the beast had been slain in shock. He was unmoving.

Drake decided to explain, since he wasn't sure if the people of the dimension knew that when he and his friends killed the beasts or even the bandits, they turned to light

particles. "When we kill the beasts, this is what happens. I believe it's different for you. Correct?" Drake asked, looking at Gavin.

Gavin nodded, looking at Drake. "Yes, but it's not that. I already know that. The Dimension Master comes here frequently. We've all seen what happens when they kill a beast."

Drake stopped Gavin. "They?"

Gavin nodded. "Just like you, he has two that follow him. They are his friends and cohort. I can't say more because it's forbidden. My concern is the beast itself. The beast was a level 2 beast. It's not supposed to be this close to town. The beasts in this area are supposed to be level 1. The beasts stay in their own area, never straying out of it. They have a specific territory that they remain in. This one was not in its territory. Something isn't right. We need to notify the mayor."

Chapter 28: 28: Change of Plans

Drake and his small group went back to the tavern looking for Mayor Ivan. They needed to tell him about the level 2 beast that had attacked them on the outskirts of town. According to Gavin, there were not supposed to be level 2 beasts in that area. There were only supposed to be level 1 beasts.

When they had reached the tavern, Mayor Ivan was still sitting at the long table with the captain of the town's guard. The men who had been present before were gone, going about their business, getting ready for an attack by the monsters.

Mayor Ivan looked up as they entered the Tavern.

Drake led the group to the long table where Ivan was sitting. His cohort was close behind him, and Gavin was at the back, following closely the small cohort.

They all had a grim expression on their faces, making Mayor Ivan drop his quill. Ink splattered on white parchment; a small spray of dark ink landed on the weathered table. The captain of the town guard stood up stiffly. "I need to help the men; it will be dark soon." He stated, leaving the mayor alone. It was true that he needed to help his men. However, whenever Mayor Ivan spilled his ink, it was because of something bad. Mayor Ivan could become unpredictable when something was going on that caused him to spill his ink. He didn't want to stick around and find out what it was.

The captain quickly rushed past Drake and his group and disappeared out of the tavern.

Drake and his group turned, stunned, watching the captain rush off like his feet were on fire.

"What happened?" Ivan asked, tugging on his scruffy beard. He did that a lot when he was worried about something. Right now, he was worried that the monsters were already on their way to attack.

Drake sat down in the chair closest to the mayor. He folded his arms across his chest before speaking. His features were a mask. Not revealing his emotions.

"We ran into a beast on the outskirts of town. It was a level 2 beast. According to Gavin, there aren't supposed to be level 2 beasts in this area. He also advised that we report it to you," Drake informed him

Ivan's face went pale. "No, level 2 beasts are supposed to be miles away from the town. By Dragon Head Mountain, the beasts can get up to Level 5, but only Level 1 beasts should be in this area. What kind of beast attacked you?"

Gavin cut in. "It was a level 2 wolf beast. It had the orange markings and acidic saliva of a level 2 beast. It was a powerful one. I could tell that it was close to evolving."

This made Ivan pale further; he tugged his beard harder. "Evolving? That's really bad. The only way they can evolve is by consuming other beasts. They only do that if something is going on that threatens them."

"They eat each other?" Mike questioned, stunned.

Ivan nodded. "They try to evolve if there is something dangerous that they are trying to protect themselves from."

"I guess the question is...what are they afraid of that is causing them to evolve?" Drake put in. He had the mask of his emotions still in place.

Mike stayed quiet, taking in what was being said. The conversation he had with Drake and Chad about there being more than one enemy floated through his thoughts. He wondered if it had something to do with the enemies that were after them.

Chad stood up. "Do you think it has to do with what we were discussing earlier...about possible enemies?" It was as if Chad read Mike's mind.

"I was just wondering that myself," Mike stated, scratching his chin.

Drake nodded, acknowledging his friend's concerns. It had come across his mind as well. He even pondered that if he and his group left Draco Town, it would remove the current dangers, making the town safe.

Drake turned to Mayor Ivan. "Who would try to stop a Dimension Master heir from completing the quests of ascension?" Drake's own words made him stop and think.

'Why did I use that phrase? Quests of ascension? I have never even heard those words before...' Drake frowned at his thoughts.

Chad, seeing his friend's confusion, turned to Drake. "Are you alright?"

Drake nodded. "I was just wondering why I asked that question in the way that I did. I have never heard of the hidden quest we are on being referred to as one of the quests of ascension. I'm just wondering where I had gotten that term for the quests."

Mike shrugged. "Maybe the Dimension Master can put information into your head," he suggested.

Drake, looking more confused, shrugged. "I don't know, maybe? I don't think so..."

Ivan and Gavin stared at the boys while they discussed the quest. Ivan's face suddenly paled. "There are several that would attempt to stop you. One of them is the oldest Dimension master. He was the Dimension master before the current one. He may not think you're ready. Another one would be the monster's leader. There is also a sorcerer who hides on the other side of Dragon Head Mountain that might try to stop you. He may try to figure out your quest, then complete it himself, which would steal your power. If he did that, there would be no way to complete the rest."

"Shit!" Drake cursed. His mask, hiding his emotions, finally fell. He turned his head to Mike and Chad, who were sitting side by side. "I think we need to leave. I wanted to stay and help, but I think the only way to truly help this place is to complete the quest before someone else does."

Mayor Ivan nodded. "I agree with you. The faster you complete the quest, the safer this town will be. I can't say it will be safe, it never is, but it will be safer than it is right now. We learned about the monsters, so we can prepare to fight them or avoid them. The information you discovered is invaluable."

"I agree, you need to finish your quest. You can worry about this town after you complete it. They can't stop you if you finish the first one. Once you finish it, you use the artifact to complete the others," Gavin stated. He looked like he was in deep thought. "I can go with you and help if you want?" he suggested.

Drake eyed Gavin, suspicious of the sudden need to help. "No," Drake stated firmly. "This quest is for me and my friends. I don't think it is allowable to take someone else. Thanks, though." He was trying to sound diplomatic, hiding his suspicion. Besides the sudden request to join his cohort to help him complete the quest, it was also strange that Gavin knew so much about the ascension process in the first place. He seemed to know more than he should.

Gavin looked taken aback. He was expecting Drake to agree to his help. Mayor Ivan, on the other hand, had an impressed look on his face. There were also hints of pride.

Drake stood up, facing Mayor Ivan. "If we leave, will you be fine while we're gone. This could take a while."

Ivan nodded. "We will be fine. We have a plan in place, and our people have a safe place to go inside their homes to keep themselves safe. I think we can handle the situation while you're away."

Chad and Mike stood up, ready to follow Drake out. With one last look at the long table, the three boys headed out of the tavern and toward the road. Drake wanted to check on Nelly first. He had grown attached to the child since he had rescued her from the gargoyles. He decided against it, worried that it would hinder their quest and give those trying to stop them more time to prepare whatever they were trying to do. There was also the possibility that the sooner they left Draco Town, the sooner the danger would disappear. The theory was that the trouble would leave the small town to follow the boys on their quest.

With Drake in the lead, they stepped over the boundary of Draco Town and headed down the packed dirt road toward Dragon Head Mountain. It was already late afternoon. They needed to get as far as they could before it got too dark, find a spot to set the cabin, and stay for the night. There was a long and dangerous road ahead of them.

A figure in a dark cloak hid behind a tree in the forest line. He was watching the young heir and his cohort as they walked down the packed dirt road, as they continued their journey. The cloaked figure stood at the tree line, watching them, waiting for them to get a little further away before he followed them. As the figure inched his way through the forest, there was a wide grin on his face as they made their way toward the large mountain shaped like the head of a massive dragon.

Chapter 29: 29: Ambush Pt 1

The twin suns were lowering into the horizon, turning the sky a crimson red as Drake and his friends followed the dirt-packed road. It was getting late, and they needed to find a safe place to sleep for the night.

"We need to find a place to sleep for the night. I have the cabin in my storage book, in my cuff, but we need to find a good place to set it." Drake stated as he scanned the area, watching for beasts.

He could easily place it directly on the road, although he wasn't sure if there was enough room. The trees were too close to the road.

They had traveled for several hours down the dirt road, but hadn't encountered even one beast. That was strange. There weren't even any bandits along the dirt road. They had expected to come across something, even if it were a level one wolf beast, the usual one they seemed to encounter. There was nothing. Frowning, Drake realized that he didn't even hear insects or other animals that wandered the night.

His posture stiffened as he scanned the area around them.

Unaware of his friend's change in behavior, Chad looked around the flat area; the only space he saw was the trail that led to the clearing near the gargoyle's lair. The narrow trail weaved into the thick trees like a snake. "I don't think we should stop in that clearing. Something about it feels wrong."

Mike nodded in agreement, shivering at just the thought of camping in that particular clearing.

Drake sighed; his posture remained stiff as he scanned the area. "We need to find someplace, it's getting dark. Our only other option is to keep walking, regardless of how dark it is." He frowned. "I'm not sure we have a choice. Either we take a chance on the clearing or continue down the road, traveling at night. Which do you want to do?"

"Travel at night!" Chad and Mike stated at once. The clearing gave them the creeps. Something about it felt sinister; it was as if the clearing itself was alive and wanted to eat them.

Drake gulped, his ears twitching, taking in the silence. It was baffling that complete silence could be so loud. Pulling out his new sword, Drake held it in his hand, preparing to fight. He could feel the silence closing in on him. He knew something was wrong, but wasn't sure what it was. The darker the night sky grew, the greater the chance of being attacked. His feeling of unease grew. The elegant runes lining the thin blade glowed faintly as they continued down the road.

The trio didn't get far. When the crimson light faded, the dimension's darkness consumed them. The darkness was thick with a suffocating pressure. The pitch blackness stretched around them as if they were in a dome of shadows and darkness. The only thing that penetrated the dark was the faintly growing runes on the Emerald Sword.

Drake stiffened; his posture grew so rigid it was like a steel rod. First, the nauseating silence, now the impenetrable darkness. His fear grew, threatening to consume him. Looking around wearily, he tried to listen, but there was only the strange silence.

"I don't think traveling at night is going to be possible at this point. This area is too dark. We don't even have a torch or lantern to light our path," Mike grumbled, still unaware of Drake's change in mood. He turned his head, facing the sinister clearing even though he could no longer see the path that led to it. "Yet something about that clearing is really menacing. I don't want to go there either."

Chad had taken his bow off his back, pulled the string, creating a glowing white energy arrow, then pointed it out into the darkness. The faint glow gave them a little more light in their immediate area, but they couldn't see past their own group. "Is it just me, or is

the darkness around us supernatural of some kind?" Chad stated wearily. "It doesn't feel natural."

Unconsciously, Drake and his friends moved with their backs facing each other. They held their weapons out, ready to defend themselves. Mike's storm sword glowed brightly, an ethereal blade at the ready. Chad's arrow grew brighter the longer he had it materialized. Drake had his sword out, pointing it toward the darkness in front of him. They waited for something to happen.

They could feel the tension around them was thick with a sinister air. The silence was deafening. The pressure was rapidly closing in on the trio. It slammed against them, making it difficult to breathe. They stiffened as the pressure grew, readying their weapons. The darkness wrapped around them like a noose.

Something was out there. They couldn't see it. Somehow, they knew that they were not alone. The darkness was too thick. The only light was the glow of their weapons. Drake moved his sword to his sheath, keeping it loose and ready. Letting his whip fall to the packed dirt, he filled its length with energy. The length of the metallic whip shone with a glowing green light.

As Drake peered into the darkness, his own eyes began to glow. Shining forms materialized in his vision. There were five. Each form stood facing them, their massive wings extended, their eyes glowed a sinister red.

"We are about to be attacked," Drake whispered as his eyes grew brighter. "There are five gargoyles surrounding us."

Chad and Mike paled, quickly glancing at Drake. When they noticed his glowing eyes, they understood. The power of being the Dimension Master's heir was working in his favor. He could use a magical vision to see through the thick layer of darkness.

"Is there room to place your cabin...you never know, they might not be able to enter it," Mike suggested.

Drake shook his head, "No, they're too close." The grave tone of Drake's voice made the other boys flinch.

"What do we do?" Chad choked out. He couldn't shoot something that he couldn't see.

"We try not to die or be taken," was all he said as he slashed his whip toward the largest gargoyle who had been standing in front of him, watching, waiting.

The ethereal copy flew first, followed by its metallic counterpart; it sliced the massive being in half as it attempted to fly higher. The gargoyle wasn't fast enough, taking the twin blows with full force. "One down," Drake called as the soft voice floated through his mind.

{You have slain a Gargoyle Soldier.}

{Strength +1}

Drake's whip had returned to him before he turned to his next target. He could feel his strength growing from the attribute point. He knew it wasn't much, but it could help them. Drake let the energy flow through the whip, making its entire length glow. He watched for one of the other gargoyles to attack his friends. They seemed reluctant to do so. "There's one directly in front of each of you," Drake warned. He scanned the sky above them quickly to make sure that there weren't other dangers hiding. There was.

As Chad shot an arrow through the darkness and quickly pulled his bow, creating a new arrow, Drake looked up at the lone figure above the. There was a hunched figure, hiding in the trees. From what he could tell, the smaller gargoyle was controlling the darkness. There was no glow to the little one's eyes.

'his eyes must be closed,' Drake thought. Using his whip, he lashed upwards, aiming for the small, hunched figure. The ethereal whip collided with the small gargoyle, making him lose his concentration. The creature screamed in pain as his eyes opened. A soft red glow shone as he stared down at Drake. Its beady red eyes narrowed in anger.

The creature was missing an arm. It had been severed from the shoulder, and half of his wing was missing as well. The only thing that had saved him was the thick branch he was sitting on.

The darkness surrounding them began to slowly melt like wax, revealing the gargoyles that had surrounded them.

With practiced speed, Chad immediately began to fire. With his targets in sight, he couldn't miss. "The one in the tree," Drake hissed as he slashed his whip at another. The gargoyles on the ground had all attacked at once.

Drake realized the gargoyles were too close for his whip. Shift it to his other hand, he pulled the Emerald Sword. The elegant runes glowed brightly, and the beautiful blade filled with a soft green glow. Drake slashed the gargoyle in front of him, then quickly shot the energy at the smaller one in the trees.

{You have slain a Gargoyle shaman}

{Mana +1}

After shooting the shaman, he slashed down, hitting his opponent. A large gash appeared on the gargoyle's chest, and blood seeped from the wound like tears. The monster grinned, its red eyes gleaming with hatred.

{A member of your cohort has killed a gargoyle; your cohort grows stronger}

{Wind Sword has been received}

{Strength +1}

{A member of your cohort has killed a gargoyle: your cohort grows stronger}

{Gold has been received}

{mana +1}

Chapter 30: 30: Ambush Pt 2

As Drake fought the monster in front of him, he could feel the power of his new attribute points change his body. The glow of his sword grew brighter as it felt lighter in his hand. He could feel the added power flowing through his veins. With new vigor, Drake slashed his sword. It collided with the massive sword in the gargoyle's hand. Green and yellow sparks flew, bursting like fireworks as the blades made contact.

He dodged and parried as the swords clashed. An evil glint shone brightly in the gargoyle's glowing red eyes as they fought. Drake grinned. His own eyes were glowing brightly. Two green orbs in the darkness of the night. He could tell that this gargoyle was strong. Much stronger than the others he fought. Even those who attacked Draco Town were not as strong as this one.

The massive gargoyle pulled a dagger out of its belt and threw it. It was heading toward him at lightning speed. Drake knew he couldn't move out of the way; there was no time, the blade was too fast. Shifting to the side, he flung his whip at the dagger. The ethereal whip pushed the dagger out of Drake's path, but the metallic whip missed it completely. Moving back, he parried the sword that followed the dagger. Their blades clashed once again, the sparks bursting as the blades collided. The clank of the dagger echoed through the night as it fell to the ground, bouncing across the hard dirt road.

Kicking out with his foot, he pushed the gargoyle back with his heel, stepping back himself. He carried his whip in his left hand, the sword in his right, each glowing with its soft emerald light. They stared each other down, neither backing down.

The sound of the clash with the other gargoyle was heard nearby. Drake could tell that both of his friends were still doing fine. He couldn't help but worry, especially with Chad not having a melee weapon. He only had his bow.

The gargoyle in front of him lunged forward, his large sword gripped tightly as he swung it at Drake. Drake spun to the side, then parried the blow. The blades clashed. The power of the gargoyles' swing pushed him back so hard that he fell to the packed dirt. Rolling to the side, the giant sword barely missed his heart as the monster tried to pierce it. The massive blade smashed into the dirt. It was stuck in the ground several inches deep, forcing its wielder to stop to yank it out, giving Drake time to stand up.

Drake rolled back onto his feet, standing tall, his weapons grasped, his sword in one hand, the whip in the other, as he waited to defend himself. His mind raced, trying to come up with a plan. The monster was too strong. He feared that it was only a matter of time before he lost and was sent to his death. As plan after plan entered his mind, he couldn't help but wonder if he would turn into light particles when he died, like those of this dimension. Would he be sent home, or would he lie dead in a pile of flesh and bone? The thought scared him.

Freeing his sword, the gargoyle lunged again. Drake swung his sword, aiming for the arm that held the other's massive sword. The gargoyle twisted, causing Drake's sword to hit only air. As he fought, he poured energy into his weapons, their glow increasing each second. His weapons were a blinding green that shone through the darkness of the night. It was nearly impossible to become brighter.

The battle was paused once more, two foes facing each other. A growl left the gargoyle's fanged mouth. His fangs were so large they looked like Saber teeth. Spit coating the long fangs. Drake sneered; his eyes glowing with a fierce green light. He refused to give up.

A plan flashed through his mind. Drake grinned. It could work. He had to act fast, though. He could leave no pause in his attack and give the gargoyle no time to react. Drake cleared his mind, focusing on his plan. As the gargoyle swung his large sword, Drake blocked it, the metal of the two swords colliding. He stepped back quickly so he could use his whip.

With his other hand, Drake slashed his whip. As it flew through the air, he filled his sword with his green power and stabbed it forward. The ethereal whip hit first, slicing half of the gargoyle's arm; its metallic counterpart followed less than a second later, and it cut through its wing. The fleshy appendage fell to the dirt with a thud, blood pouring from its stump. The gargoyle turned, trying to lessen the blow. It didn't save it from the sword's blade. An ethereal blade had shot out of the sword and slammed into the gargoyle a millisecond before the real blade. The bladed energy entered its soft flesh like butter, exiting through its wide back. The runed metal followed after, making the wound larger. A large hole appeared in the gargoyle's center, blood pouring from the wound, yet the gargoyle was still alive.

"Fuck!" Drake cursed as he filled his sword again, and the runes glowed brightly as an ethereal blade formed.

As the gargoyle stumbled backward, there was shock on its sinister face. Swaying briefly, trying to regain his balance. He was dizzy from the loss of blood. Drake stabbed forward, the glowing energy exited his blade and flew through the air, smashing into the gargoyle's face. The energy exploded. The gargoyle burst into a cloud of light particles.

Drake fell to his knees in exhaustion. It was a tough fight. He had used an immense amount of mana. Using that amount drained him, leaving him weak and exhausted.

The soft voice floated through Drake's mind.

{You have slain a gargoyle warrior}

{You have received a reward}

{You have received Lantern of truth}

Drake slowly stood up, having to use his sword to help him. He stumbled to where the little lantern glowed on the ground, barely being able to stay upright. Bending down, he picked up the small lantern. The small item was only three inches tall and two inches wide. It produced a soft white glow, lighting the area with ease. He was surprised the light it produced wasn't green.

He groaned in pain and exhaustion. He could barely move, but he knew his friends were still fighting. He had to help. He knew there was one more gargoyle they were fighting; he started to turn around to help his friends. He remembered the system said there was a reward, and he hoped the sword was Chad's. Since he was an archer, a wind sword would be perfect for him.

Before he could turn around fully and help his friends, the soft voice sounded.

{A member of your cohort has slain a gargoyle; your cohort grows stronger}

{mana+1}

He looked at his friends, and a small smile played on his lips as he dropped to one knee, not being able to keep himself up any longer. "There should be a bag of gold and a sword around here," he told them. His voice was strained from exhaustion. His gaze turned to Chad. "I believe the sword is yours."

Chad looked shocked, giving a short pause before responding. "How did you know that? I saw it fall when that first gargoyle exploded. I killed it, so I already knew that it was mine, but how did you know?" Chad asked, flabbergasted.

Drake's smile grew. "It's called Wind Sword. You're an archer, so it makes sense. As for the gold, I don't really know; I was distracted. You two know who killed what, so I guess you two can distribute it accordingly. As I said, if you kill it, you keep its loot," he laughed. "Or give it away. It's yours, so do what you want with it. Keep that sword, though. You need a melee weapon, and that one was obviously meant for you."

As Chad picked up the sword, Mike picked up the gold. He seemed to be collecting a lot of it. Chad's sword was beautiful. White runes were etched along its thin blade. The handle was made for one hand. It was a short sword. As he studied it, a soft white glow formed around the blade. Chad smiled. He could feel its power. He knew what it could

do; he could feel it. As he held the sword, he felt a calming, refreshing feeling. "That is so cool!" he said aloud, more to himself than anyone else.

Drake collapsed without warning onto the packed dirt. He wheezed as he breathed in and out. His friends rushed to him, worried. Blood spilled from his mouth, pooling onto the ground. He had fallen forward. When Mike and Chad reached him, there was a thin dagger sticking out of Drake's back.

Chad stood frozen, looking at his friend in shock. Mike looked up in the direction the dagger had come from. A man stood in the trees, a sinister grin on his face as his laugh echoed through the trees.