

Living Shadow 82

Chapter 82 Omnidirectional Gear

Damon's surprise was warranted. He pulled off his blindfold just to be sure his shadow perception wasn't deceiving him. Since they'd entered the room, he had made a conscious effort not to use his shadow perception to peer into the chest. But now, he regretted his restraint.

Anvil wasn't holding a grappling hook as Damon had expected. Instead, he was holding what appeared to be a pair of metal braces designed to be worn on the wrists, extending from the wrist to the elbow.

The old blacksmith grinned, clearly pleased with himself.

"Behold my masterpiece!"

Damon frowned as Anvil approached him, the braces in hand.

"I think you might have mixed up my order with someone else's..."

Anvil chuckled heartily.

"I had no idea you had a sense of humor under that gloomy expression."

The blacksmith flipped one of the braces over, revealing a mechanism hidden on the underside. Damon's eyes widened as he took in the intricate design. It looked like a series of pulleys, with a bundle of thin strings wrapped around one of them. He could have sworn there were springs embedded within the mechanism, but even with his shadow perception, the inner workings remained somewhat unclear. At the tip of the brace, a small metal blade peeked out slightly.

"What even is this?" Damon asked, his curiosity tinged with skepticism.

Anvil's grin widened as he launched into an explanation.

"This is a hook—but it's much more than just for climbing. You wanted something compact that could fit under your uniform, so I designed these. One for each arm."

He pointed to the thin blade at the tip of the brace.

"I used what was left of the magisite to craft the hook. It might look like an arrowhead, but when you activate it, it shoots out and pins to a target. The pulleys and springs allow for recoil, and the thread replaces traditional rope. With these, you can pull yourself toward something—or pull something toward you."

Damon examined the braces closely, turning them over in his hands. The craftsmanship was impeccable, and the functionality sounded impressive. Still, he was cautious.

"This... is definitely not what I expected."

Anvil clapped him on the back, nearly knocking him forward.

"That's the beauty of it! You'll see. Once you get the hang of these, you'll wonder how you ever lived without them."

Anvil gave Damon a quick glance and grinned.

"I could try explaining it all, but it would take too much time. So, I made a small manual. It's hard to use, but if you train yourself, it could even come in handy during a fight."

Carls, standing nearby, eyed the braces warily as Damon inspected them with his dark, unreadable eyes.

"Hey, old man... I get it's a hook, but those strings don't seem strong enough to carry a grown man. Won't they just snap?"

Before Anvil could answer, Damon ran his fingers along one of the strings. A faint hiss escaped his lips as a thin cut appeared on his finger.

"This is the webbing of a Crystal Arachne... or rather, its threads," Damon muttered.

Anvil nodded proudly.

Carls paled at the mention of the monster. The Crystal Arachne was a spider-like creature feared even by seasoned adventurers, capable of killing third-class advancements or higher. Its webbing was tougher than steel, and its body was even deadlier.

"How did you even get your hands on something like that?" Carls asked, his voice trembling slightly.

Anvil shrugged casually.

"It's not that expensive. Most people only care about the mana core and the tough body of the beast. Its webs are too sharp to handle, so they're usually discarded. Lucky for you, I've got a knack for making use of what others throw away."

Damon rolled up his sleeves and strapped the braces onto his arms. They felt surprisingly comfortable, almost as if they were made specifically for him. He tightened the belts around them and glanced at Anvil.

"How do I use it?"

Anvil handed him a small book filled with detailed diagrams and instructions.

"This is the manual. Read it."

Damon nodded, flipping through the pages briefly before tucking the manual into his cloak.

"Sure, but how much do I actually owe you?"

Anvil shook his head.

"Like I said before, it's ten thousand for the extra work. I'm not taking a penny more."

Carls raised an eyebrow. "This must have cost more than a few thousand to make..."

Damon, though reluctant to part with money, had to admit that Anvil had likely shouldered much of the expense himself.

Anvil crossed his arms.

"My work is my pride. I said ten thousand, and that's final. If you don't like it, leave the stuff behind, and I'll refund your ore."

Damon sighed, accepting the terms. "Fine. Not like I wanted to pay more anyway."

Anvil grinned. "That's the spirit!"

Eager to test the device, Damon followed the manual's first instructions. He aimed at a training dummy, activating the mechanism. The hook shot out with a faint hiss, embedding itself in the target. The strings were so thin they were almost invisible.

He flipped to the next section of the manual and tried pulling the dummy toward himself. However, he underestimated the pull force of the springs and lost his footing, getting yanked forward and smashing headfirst into the dummy.

"Agh! My head..." Damon groaned, sprawled on the ground.

Anvil and Carls exchanged a glance before bursting into laughter.

Carls clutched his stomach. "I can't believe it! The great Phantom, fumbling like a rookie!"

Anvil pointed, tears of laughter streaming down his face.

"Careful, kid! You've got to get used to the recoil!"

Damon got up awkwardly, rubbing his head. The pain stung more than his pride. He pulled his blindfold back over his eyes, more to hide his embarrassment than block out the excess information from his shadow perception.

"Right. I'll keep that in mind. I should probably read the entire manual before trying anything else. If I'm not careful, I'll end up as a stain on the wall."

Anvil nodded sagely.

"It's dangerous, sure, but I made it knowing you'd figure it out. Those strings aren't just for grappling—they're perfect for strangling someone, too."

Carls sighed heavily.

"Why do I feel like you just handed him a tool for murder when all he wanted was a grappling hook?"

Damon silently inspected the braces, their weight familiar now. He could already think of dozens of applications for them. As he glanced at his shadow, he sensed it watching him. Through its perspective, he caught a glimpse of himself—a faint, dangerous smile spreading across his face.