

Tutorial 291

Chapter 291: In really bad mood

A day passes, and I remove the rubble from my body, which is now in a better state. However, it still bears plenty of wounds: cracked bones, not fully healed muscles, and a significant chunk of my leg is still missing.

It's raining once again, and I exit the building, letting the deadly rain fall on my skin, disrupting it with my mana.

[Perception] looks around, and I start walking. I do not use anchors, worried they might be tracked, and I use only a little mana, not knowing where the monster is. Just a bit to keep my body strengthened, allowing me to move faster and cross the rooftops.

It takes a bit longer, but I reach the old grannys place. At first, I pass by it a few times. As wrecked as my body is, I cant locate the place with the field that surrounds it. It's either that or the granny changed the field a little.

When I finally locate it, I enter the rooftop and, triggering a signal, the old woman comes out of the house. Walking between the flower pots, I stop in front of her, standing on one leg and my mana prosthetic.

She opens her mouth to say something, but that's when my skill activates. [Redistribution] absorbs her kinetic energy and stops her mouth from moving.

"I will be brief," I tell her. "On another day, I wouldn't mind a bit of bickering, but right now, I am in a really bad mood. So now, I will let you go, and you will tell me what you want from me in exchange for healing, or tell me to fuck off."

I let go of her, and she staggers backward. Her expression turning serious, "I will heal you. We can talk about what you did later. If I ask for something annoying, you can refuse."

After that, she heads inside the house, and I follow her. She sends out a pulse of mana, which deactivates the item radiating the tranquilizing field. I sit on the chair as she gestures to me.

Her hands touch my shoulder, and warm mana flows into my body, healing me for the first time.

"What the fuck," she gasps, and I sense her skill observing my body.

She checks the wounds, feels the imbalance between my attributes, and peripherally senses my constant control over my mana.

"WHAT THE FUCK," she repeats, getting a better image of my body before she starts healing me.

I feel my body sway and my mind spin, but I force myself to stay awake and carefully observe the entire process. Ready to react if she tries anything suspicious, I observe the way she moves her mana. Maybe I could learn a thing or two from her; that's what I hope for. But in the end, her healing is similar to Lily's. Yes, weaker and clumsier, but it's the same at its core.

As she's healing me, she uses nearly all of her mana. Her healing doesn't restore my leg. Not because she is incapable, but because she heals the other wounds first. My Phoenix Embrace has healed a lot and given enough time, it would heal the rest. But there are advantages to having an active healing skill, even though she is much lower level than I am.

When she is done, she moves back and sits on the couch in the corner, catching her breath. Meanwhile, I start generating thermal energy with my Thermokinetic Mana Heart and sending it to the places where I'm still hurt and towards my leg. It slowly continues to grow with the help of the passive.

The old woman doesn't ask anything or bicker with me. When I look at her, she simply says, "I will ask later."

With a nod, I push myself back onto my feet and turn to leave. Outside of the house, I take a deep breath and jump over the edge of the roof, landing on the road. I absorb the energy of my fall and start running, transferring some of that energy into strengthening.

I head towards the Sanctuary and am close to exiting the city when I feel a signal from Vega. It's a signal I told her to send only if she needed help.

Disregarding the chance that the guardian will track and follow me, I use [Tether] and teleport to the anchor.

Reappearing in our room, I find Vega in the barrier I made for her. She is fine and holding a knife in her hand, the one I created with [Regalia]. Her heart beats, generating kinetic energy that flows through her body.

Slowly, I turn towards the intruders in the room.

We were worried! We kept calling for you, Darren says. You didn't answer for close to two days, and when we tried to open the door, they were blocked, so we got inside. The

My skill encompasses them all: Darren, Nina, and a few men with them, too. They all freeze, unable to twitch a finger unlike the Veil Guardian I wasn't able to grasp.

I glance at Vega, scared, in a battle stance in the middle of the barrier and then at the intruders. For a short moment, I fight the urge to release just a bit of my kinetic energy and kill them all. My already terrible mood, which I've been pushing to the back of my mind with [Focus], sours even further at this situation. Especially seeing Vega scared, whom I left alone for so long without saying anything.

Stolen novel; please report.

A cone of kinetic energy bursts forth, about to tear the group apart, but at the last moment, I redirect it, and it obliterates the wall to their left.

A high pitch reverberates in the air, and the wall turns to dust. Fuck off, I tell them and release my hold. Without saying anything, they run away, Darren pulling Nina behind him.

Glancing towards Vega, I cancel the barrier surrounding her. My disciple then carefully puts the dagger away but doesn't relax her body. She looks at me as if expecting to get screamed at or hit.

Instead of saying anything, I just lay on the bed and close my eyes, I wouldn't hurt you, I tell her.

I know, we made a promise, her tiny voice sounds, and I hear her taking a few steps closer to me. Something bad happened? I can almost feel her eyes on my missing leg.

Yes, a shitty day.

Not saying anything, she just climbs onto the bed, and I move over as she lays beside me. Understanding me better than most people here, she doesn't say anything. She doesn't offer words of pity, nor does she ask any questions. Vega just lays there, and soon enough, I hear her breathing settle as she falls asleep. Listening to her soft breathing, I synchronize mine with hers.

I wonder if it's my personality causing me to be in such a mood. Knowing myself as well as I do, I think it is. [Focus] probably added to it by weakening most of my useless emotions.

The Initiate of Pride could be at fault as well. No matter how I look at it, I got screwed over by the Veil Guardian. I still don't think subclasses affect emotions so much as they reflect the personality of their owner. Maybe I'm wrong, maybe one's subclass does affect their personality causing them to embody the concepts named. I won't know for sure until a later stage.

Something touches me, and when I look to the side, I realize Vega. She's moved closer to me in her sleep and, curled into a ball, she is touching my side with her back. The little half-demon girl looks better than she did at the start of the floor. She is clean, less thin, and her bruises have all been caused by training. Once again, she is wearing clean clothes I bought for her through the system shop.

She gets excited every time I buy her clothes, and I've noticed that she keeps the older ones in a bag. They are dirty, often bloodied and torn, yet she holds onto them as if they are some kind of treasure. The same goes for the dagger I made in the first facility, a trash grade uncommon item. Yet, the dagger has been carefully wrapped in a clean cloth and hidden deep in a bag I also gave her.

Such a silly little creature.

Careful to not release any of the thermal energy I'm using for healing, I continue to lay in the bed while cycling my mana.

It takes a few hours, but Vega slowly wakes up and stretches on the bed like a tiny animal. She then yawns and burrows her face into the sheets before quickly opening her eyes.

Only then does she remember where she is, realizes what she's resting against, and pulls away.

I'm sorry, she quickly blurts and jumps off the bed.

That's a great offense. Shall I call you minion for the day?

I'm sorry! she repeats, not understanding the joke.

I'm joking, you can calm down, I comfort her in an attempt to avoid some sort of silly trauma.

Examining my face, she accepts it as truth, and in the end, she adds, Master always calls me minion, so that's a dumb punishment. Vega then moves closer again. After noticing that my mood is better, she returns to her normal self.

She is good at reading people's moods. She had to learn to avoid catching beatings. She also knows that I, like her, prefer when people act honestly rather than pretending.

Her eyes examine my missing leg, Does it hurt?

Not really.

Will master have to live without a leg now?

It will regrow.

Is master a gray lizard?

The last time I checked in the mirror, I was not a gray lizard, minion. What even is that?

Her fingers poke a skin that has grown over the wound. She looks at me, It's a monster that lives in the forest near my village. They are said to be really tasty, but they're fast. They can regrow their legs if they lose them.

Do you have healers? There are people with skills that can regrow limbs as well.

Vega nods, I only heard from songs. They don't come to the places where people like me live.

Of course, they don't. Something tells me that there will be much more trouble for Lily.

Minion, if you find a healer by chance, try to keep them for yourself as much as you can. Learning some healing skills would be good if you get the chance.

I'm Vega, but I will master!

Good, something tells me you will need a lot of healing, the same as me.

My minion gives me a confused look but then glances at my leg and probably remembers the wounds she got while training.

Understanding flashes across her face and then determination follows, Will do! she repeats but this time more firmly.

Smart girl.

Did you get beaten up, master? her question hits me where it hurts, but she asks so innocently that I don't even get too annoyed.

A bit, I admit.

She turns around and rushes to her bag, taking out some food and pieces of cloth, That's okay! Master will surely win the next time. As master said, it's fine to lose, the winner is whoever is alive in the end!

I have no answer for that and she smiles at me.

After putting two pieces of the cloth on the ground, she turns to me, Will master eat with me?

Gladly.

Chapter 292: Entirely honest

Flameheart Medallion (rare) - This copper medallion can unleash a torrent of heat when fueled with mana. Capable of projecting flames, it serves as both an offensive tool to scorch enemies and a defensive mechanism to create barriers of heat that deter attackers.

Edgekeeper Blade (rare) -Cycling mana through this blade dramatically enhances its sharpness, allowing it to cleave through enemy armor and flesh.

Guardian's Wristband (rare) -By channeling mana, this steel wristband generates an energy field that can forcefully repel enemies and their attacks. The wristband's protective energy not only guards the wearer but can also be used to push opponents back during close combat.

Beacon Pendant (rare) -When activated by mana, this brass pendant emits a blinding light. This intense illumination can be used to momentarily blind attackers, providing a tactical advantage by disorienting them and making it easier to land attacks.

Not bad at all if I do say so myself. I'm especially surprised by the last one. I mostly just copied the inscriptions and the effect of an item I found on the 4th floor. Still, it did work, even though the item I made is much uglier and probably doesn't even break mid-rare.

Minion, here, play, I give the medallion, blade, and wristband to my disciple. Then I sell the pendant.

Vega quickly and possessively grabs the items and rushes back into her corner of the facility where she continues to train her kinetic demon heart while examining the items.

Just a few hours and my limit of three days will pass, and we will leave the Sanctuary. The plan is to head to the Bastion and maybe explore the Valley while leveling Vega until she gets her Primary class.

Of course, the plan has changed a bit given that I spent nearly two days out dealing with that monster, that I will totally repay for everything it put me through.

The asshole was probably as strong as the Fallen Hero or stronger. It's hard to measure it properly without fighting both. Its also a hunter type enemy that can track, and disrupt mana, with a tough body to boot.

Well, at least I took its arm and got myself a nice blade made of Voidsteel or whatever.

Voidsteel Slicer (Epic):The Voidsteel used in this blade is renowned for its vibration-absorbing qualities, allowing the wielder to cut with unmatched precision and sharpness. The Voidsteel ensures the Slicer is nearly indestructible, effortlessly cutting through almost any material.

The blade is extremely durable and sharp. I also tested it, and it works well with my [Resonance]. Surely it qualifies as at least a mid epic weapon. The only disadvantage is that it doesn't have a handle just a weird metal stump that was connected to the monsters bones, but I will deal with that later.

I probably could melt some metal and mold it around the stump to make a handle, but it wouldn't be as durable as the blade. It wouldn't be as conductive either, and it might crack during a fight.

So for now, I will keep it as it is. I can just form some armor around my body and hold it in a gauntlet. Simple as that.

Master, they are ugly, Vega says as she approaches me holding the items I gave her. Even as she cradles them with care.

Forgive me, Your Highness, next time I will remember to add some golden filigree to fit your delicate tastes, I reply.

She stares blankly at first, though she smiles after a second. "Okay!" She says before returning to her corner to continue her studies.

I'm indeed not appreciated here.

I return to the mana crystal in front of me and continue to examine it, making sure to remember the inscriptions. I plan to use them as inspiration in the future when I make my own evil lair. I already have a few places in mind when I return to Earth.

One of them is the Moon. Yup, a Moon Base is on the menu! I have to think big, don't I?

Another idea is a floating city. If I improve my kinetic energy just a little bit, I should be able to make a small island float, right?

Or maybe I can create my evil lair somewhere in the middle of an ocean.

On top of a mountain maybe? I could just decide to be a bit of an asshole and take over a mountain range in Switzerland. Or perhaps some nice valley in Colorado.

My options are endless.

I find it a bit amusing that there are still 4 years left in the tutorial, and yet I'm already thinking about how I'll abuse my powers after the tutorial. Seeing the floors within the tutorial, Earth will probably have more pressing problems than my floating city.

Feeling Darren approach once more, I sigh and place an anchor near Vega and another near him after expanding my domain. I teleport to his side, startling him to an acceptable degree, but he quickly calms himself and starts observing me with that annoying skill of his.

"First, I would like to apologize, we never wanted to..."

"Sure," I cut him off.

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He looks around, and Nina approaches as well. She bows her head too, followed by the men around them. These are the people that scared Vega and forced their way into my room. They apologize in unison.

At this point, it starts to grate on me. That's what I get for not appreciating Tess while I had her to deal with things. Even good old Hadwin Okay, that feels weird, let's not think any deeper about this.

"So, what do you want?" I ask Darren.

He gestures at his men, and they leave, leaving him and Nina alone with me.

"There is something we wanted to tell you, Nathaniel." He fixes his clothes a bit and looks straight into my eyes, "I wanted to be entirely honest with you about a few things."

"Do you mean your meat farm down in the tunnels?" I ask.

His breathing quickens, and his pupils expand. I can feel the kinetic energy as their heartbeats speed up even through their natural barrier. Their stances shift to match.

"I hope you can understand why" Darren starts carefully.

"Stop using that annoying skill," I interrupt.

I don't like the way he looks at me or the way he's trying to read me. Sure, I'm a hypocrite, I'm doing the same thing after all, but I don't feel like I owe anything to a bunch of cannibals.

The probing sensation disappears, and the way he looks at me changes. He starts looking a bit more unsure as if he was trying to guess my mood or reaction.

"We have over three thousand people here in the Sanctuary," his voice, but a whisper in the halls of the facility. "We wouldn't be able to feed everyone without constant deaths. The animals move further out over time to avoid being killed. There are weeks when we can't catch anything at all."

Nina moves closer and puts her hand on her father's shoulder.

"Trust me, if we had any other option, we'd take it. Of course," he emphasizes. "We only give the kids meat we sourced from hunting animals. And the food we gave to you was always from animals."

In this, I trust him. I checked after finding out. Well, it's not like we ate the food they gave us. I always threw it away.

"Does everyone know?" I ask.

Darren shakes his head, "Not everyone knows. I know what you're probably thinking, give people the chance to decide on their own. But Nathaniel, even if they knew and had a choice, it would only hurt them. I know it's not morally right, and I will bear full responsibility for it and the punishment, whatever it may be. All while hoping we will find a way to go on without doing this."

That's when Nina joins in, "Father likes to talk a lot, so I will say it. If you stay here, if you help us, we believe we will be able to get by without it. We know that you are strong and if you would help us to hunt just a few high-level animals once in a while, it could be enough food for weeks."

It almost makes me laugh, "Did that man agree to help you, or did you force him from the start?"

Darren takes over again, "Irvin agreed at the start. He really wanted to help, but after some time, he partially changed his mind. So my predecessor did what he had to. I believe Irvin could escape if he really wanted to; I think he still wants to help us anyways."

Finally, the man's mask cracks a bit, showing his frustration, "I know how shitty all of this is. I know!" he nearly shouts. "I just don't know what else to do. I really don't"

A shitty situation indeed.

"I will be leaving in a few hours," I tell him.

The facility becomes eerily quiet, even Vage listening to our conversation.

With a sigh, Darren nods, "I will leave you to your things then, Nathaniel. Thanks for everything."

After he leaves, I move back to the facility where Vega is waiting for me. "It's rude to eavesdrop on other people's conversations," I tell her.

"But master does it all the time!" She looks at me, slightly confused.

"Masters can do whatever they want." I pinch her cheek a bit. "How is your mana orb coming?"

"It's still very small and pale blue, but I can hold it a bit longer now," she forms one over her hand, showing off the results of her hard work.

At the same time, she keeps sending her mana senses into the area, constantly wary of danger. Partially, she also does something to her Kinetic Demon Heart.

Unlike my [Focus] which I tend to concentrate on a single thing, she uses her [Concentration] a bit differently. Like me, she can concentrate on a single task, and I can split my [Focus] into multiple threads. But Vega seems to have a better talent for using [Concentration] on multiple things at once. Of course, each instance isn't as powerful as focusing on a single thing, but even then it has its advantages.

I've already decided not to stop her from doing so. It will be more helpful if she does something she has talent for rather than blindly following my advice.

"Good job," I hand her a small mana stone, "You can train with this too. It should help you a bit."

"Thanks!" She immediately takes the stone and rushes to the spot where she keeps all her things. All carefully guarded like the hoard of an old dragon.

I turn to return to examining the mana crystal for the last time when the transmitter in my pocket activates. This time it feels weird, a bit different from before when Darren used it.

(I hope I got your frequency correct, so answer if you hear me, Mr. Fucked Attribute Balance.)

(That's a rude thing to say to a cute young man, granny,) I send back.

(My old ass is cuter than you.)

Okay, now I really feel insulted.

But she continues before I can answer, (I don't like to waste my words, so I will be brief. You owe me, right? Do you intend to pay me back, or should I forget about it because it means nothing to you?)

(If you ask for too much, I will refuse, but yes, I owe you something.)

(Good. Do you remember the man they keep in the tunnel and use as cattle? My father?)

(It's hard to forget.)

(Good. In exchange for all the help I gave you, I want you to kill him.)

The already shitty situation became even shittier.

Chapter 293: To pay you back

Taking a few steps, I reach the open circular iron door that leads to the facility, and from where I stand, I look towards the city that is in a half-spherical cave.

As I noticed before, there are plenty of buildings that seem much older than the others. They are likely the original buildings of the cave. Yet even they show the passage of time. There are scratches, and there is rust on the surface.

There are even a few cracks on some taller ones. The newer buildings are mostly made of wood, with some clay-like material for daubing. The city isn't perfectly clean, no matter how people try, there just isn't enough water.

People are even wearing clothes that are made from old cloth or leather. Plenty of them are thin and scarred. Everyone seems to have something to do, trying to be useful to keep the Sanctuary going.

And plenty of them are cannibals without ever knowing, eating meat they think comes from the animals hunted outside.

(Why such a change of heart?) I finally ask the granny, (You seemed of a different opinion before.)

I'm honestly curious.

(Will you do it?) she asks me instead.

I then think about it for a bit longer and answer, (I will free him and give him the chance to kill himself. The decision will be on him.)

(Ha! Even if it means he might kill himself and most of the people will die of hunger sooner or later?)

(Weird thing to say after what you asked of me. So, is that sufficient to pay you back?)

(I guess I will have to live with that much. Yes, consider your debt repaid.)

After that, the connection turns off, and I break the transmitter in my hand and watch as pieces of it fall to the ground.

I send my mana ahead, and a thermal orb forms in front of me, which I start to fill with golden thermal energy.

I've officially completed the quest to find out what's happening in the Sanctuary, and I've already gotten a thousand shards. I also filled more tanks with water and filtered it, but that hasn't completed the other one asking me to help the survivors. I plan to try one more thing, but with 10 days left until the end of my 3 weeks with my disciple, it's time to head north.

"Minion, stay here for a bit, okay?" She doesn't react, even as I say this, totally focused on her training to the point where she isn't even checking her surroundings.

I would be a bit more annoyed if it wasn't something I do myself.

Instead of trying to talk to her again, I just create a barrier in front of the door to the facility and then use the anchor I left on the surface.

With a push of kinetic energy, I send myself high into the air and then deeper into the forest.

[Perception] fires off as I start looking for animals. Even they are quite abnormal. In a place where veil shriekers roam freely, only the stronger ones have survived. Well, them and the ones that have learned to avoid them.

With the speed I'm flying at, it doesn't take that long, and I locate the first one.

[Berserk boar - lvl 190]

The boar detects me while I'm hovering in the air. Its eyes turn blood red. There is no mana, and I detect it as an animal with a full physical build.

I create an anchor near its eye and send a sharp explosion of kinetic energy through, obliterating half of its face. The monster sways, and for a moment, it looks like it will fall, but then the wound starts healing, fully restoring itself. I send three more piercing attacks through the monster, each burrowing deeper into its head. There it reaches the skull which disperses and reflects the attack.

As its healing, its head little more than a bloody skull, the boar jumps into the air, using its sheer strength to reach me. A single red eye glowing maniacally.

I avoid it with ease, and when the boar falls back to the ground, I quickly create and compress a mana arrow. I boost it with kinetic energy, and it pierces through the animal's skull. I tried to avoid damaging the body too much at first; there is no way I won't show the beauty of a full mana build to someone focused on physical stats.

The boar wobbles, healing even that wound. The feeling I get from its body becomes even more dangerous.

With a sigh I allow myself to settle on the ground and my mana radiates into the area.

[Redistribution] grabs and holds the monster, even though its strength is nothing to scoff at.

I take a few steps and touching its head I release the kinetic energy Ive collected, exploding most of its head and the entirety of its brain.

[You have defeated Berserk Boar - lvl 190]

Then I touch its body and send it through [Tether] to the anchor I left at the main entrance to the Sanctuary.

I check the side quest and it's still not completed. Collecting more kinetic energy I lift off again and [Perception] sends a pulse into the area. I reduce the amount of details it collects and focus more on extending the range. Sensing multiple presences, I fly towards them for half a minute and land on top of one of the bigger trees.

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Down in the clearing, there is a group of animals.

[Lightning Bison - lvl 122]

[Lightning Bison - lvl 180]

[Lightning Bison - lvl 165]

[Lightning Bison - lvl 198]

[Lightning Bison - lvl 201]

[Lightning Bison - lvl 200]

They detect me nearly immediately but don't seem to be too bothered. Only two of them that are over 200 look at me. Projectiles form over their bodies like arrows made of lightning and shoot toward me.

Before the projectiles even reach me I disrupt them and continue to observe the animals.

They are all probably twice or thrice the size of bison on earth. Their fur is brown with streaks of lighter brown that look like lightning. Their horns are bigger than the horns the ones on earth have. The horns are transparent and look as if they have lightning trapped inside of them.

I return fire with a mana arrow as a test.

It meets with a barrier of lightning created by one of the bison and they all turn to me. The attacks on my position intensify, bombarding me with a barrage of lightning which I continue to disrupt. For a second I activate my trait and observe the attack and change the level of disruption I'm using, lowering the expenditure of mana.

At one point they destroy the tree I'm standing on and as it falls I hold myself in the air. Behind me six javelins form and I start compressing them, making them heavier and stronger. It's not to the point of the javelin I used against the Veil guardian, but I wouldn't call them weak either.

The group of Bison senses that, but they don't seem to be too bothered. Even their attacks seem halfhearted as if they were trying to send an annoying fly away.

It might be me hiding most of my mana or them not having to deal with any real threats. Hell, they may be dumb as heck for all I know or waiting for me to drop my guard.

When I feel like all six javelins are strong enough, I turn to them.

Finally sensing something, they form a domed barrier around their group, the six of them working in unison.

Without hesitating, I release all the kinetic energy I've been collecting and boost all of the javelins right after sending a disrupting wave through the anchor I left near the Bisons.

The disrupting wave weakens the barrier and the heavy and extremely boosted javelins pierce through the rest.

Each of the mana javelins pierces through the head of one of the monsters.

[You have defeated Lightning Bison - lvl 122]

[You have defeated Lightning Bison - lvl 165]

[You have defeated Lightning Bison - lvl 180]

Half of them die immediately and only the stronger ones survive the wound. They roar and start collecting mana, lightning flickering around their bodies.

I use the anchor I left near them and teleport, [Regalia] forming armor around myself while I take out the Voidsteel slicer. [Resonance] flows through the blade, synchronizing with it and making it even

sharper and infusing it with mana disrupting properties. Before they even react, I remove one of their heads.

[You have defeated Lightning Bison - lvl 201]

Lightning tries to jump from its body to the blade and me, but its disrupted the moment it touches the metal.

The remaining two move at surprising speed, their horns elongating and the front of their heads emitting a shield-like barrier full of lightning.

I boost my body, dodging the attack and matching the speed of the monsters. The blade slashes again, removing another head.

[You have defeated Lightning Bison - lvl 198]

A lightning attack from the remaining bison disperses on my armor and I let its charge hit me. As the attack lands, I absorb the kinetic energy of the charge and my body doesn't even move from the spot. More lightning explodes all around us, tearing the ground apart and exploding the trees, giving me goosebumps as I feel the hair on my scalp rise.

I transfer absorbed kinetic energy into strengthening my body and move to the side and slash again.

The Bison tries to block the attack, but the blade ignores all the defenses.

[You have defeated Lightning Bison - lvl 200]

I calm down my mana and continue to search for any danger while I step closer to the monster. For a while, I examine its body.

The skin isn't as tough as I thought it was and the only part that interests me is the horns. So I take some time to remove all the horns before using [Tether] to send them to the Sanctuary.

This time a big chunk of my mana disappears. The expenditure isn't as big as if the Bisons were alive or if I had to deal with a natural barrier. I've tried it before but using an anchor on someone who isn't much weaker than me is extremely difficult. Well, it's not like I don't have enough mana anyway.

When they are gone, I check the side quest again. And nothing.

With a sigh, I lift off and head towards another group of animals.

After sending through a few dozen more animals, the quest has finally been completed and I receive 1000 shards. The entire time, I made sure I was hunting them far enough at places where the survivors would never go. I did it to avoid scaring off the animals they usually hunt.

When I use the anchor to reappear in front of the Sanctuary, the giant doors are wide open, and it looks like the entire city is there, skinning or moving the animals inside. They are carefully taking the skins, bones, organs, everything. Nothing seems to go to waste.

Hundreds of people jostling about, children laughing, adults smiling. Every one of the unknowing cannibals seems to be happy. Some of them start to notice me and rush me with big smiles on their faces.

I quickly use another anchor and reappear near Vega. When she doesn't react to my presence, too focused on her training, I grab one of her small horns and shake her head.

She doesn't even try to push my hand away, resigned to her fate, knowing that her best option is to hope I get bored. That amuses me even more, and I continue to wobble and gently shake her head for an entire minute. The way she tries to hide her annoyance makes it even more fun. To frustrate her even more, I stop when she is reaching out to push my hand away.

Minion, your awareness sucks, I tell her, Anyway, get ready and pack your things, were about to leave. I will be back soon after dealing with one more thing.

My senses flow into the Sanctuary and I quickly find Darren and Nina. Teleporting outside of the facility where Vega is packing our stuff, I move towards them.

Chapter 294: Heading North

A group of ten or so people, including Darren and Nina, waits for me near the facility that Vega and I were using. Even though most of them seem happy, there is an awkwardness to their smiles. It deepens even more when I reach them.

Before Darren says anything, I interrupt him with a listening finger, "You can use that annoying skill of yours. It will make things a bit easier."

He closes his mouth, and his forehead furrows. A hint of worry on his face.

"I want to thank you for what you did. The amount of food you gave us should be able to last for years," he says carefully.

That's true. Most of the animals I brought were higher level, and just a little bit of their meat is enough to feed a low level human. And that is what most of the survivors here are.

"Good, I want you to tell everyone what they were eating all these years."

The smile disappears from everyone's faces. I don't fail to notice Nina watching me with newfound interest. She's the only one from the group that seems intrigued.

"I understand where you are coming from, but we just can't. Even though the food we have will last for years, the time will come when we will need..."

His words die off in the tunnel as he uses his skill. His face gradually pales. He shifts uncomfortably and tries to say something, but no words come out of his mouth.

I speak in his place, "Darren, I'm this close," I gesture with my hand, "to killing everyone standing here. This fucking close to dyeing the walls of this shitty bunker with your flesh and blood."

His face pales further even though I'm not even releasing any mana or threatening him otherwise.

I take a step towards him, "I will go to check on the man down in the tunnels. I will free him and give him the opportunity to kill himself if he wishes to do so. Or he can leave and fight you guys. If he really wants to, he can stay down there. It's up to him."

Darren's mouth opens and closes. He probably wants to say something about children or women. People dying without food. The same old bullshit.

But I don't care. They should know. Then they can kill Darren for doing this to them if they wish to. Or they can embrace what they were doing and continue doing so, becoming savages. What's important is the choice Darren never gave them.

"Sounds good, right, Darren? So meanwhile, while I'm down there with your surprise meat supplier, you will go and talk to everyone in the Sanctuary."

The only one from the group with a different expression from the others is Nina. She looks relieved. Is this something she's always wanted to do without ever finding the courage?

Looking at them one last time, I place an anchor as far as I can and repeat it a few times until I teleport down to the tunnels. Irvin sits there on the bed as before, surrounded by blood and pieces of his limbs in the corner.

One grumpy granny sends her greetings, a Vitalist. Now that I think about it, I never asked for her name. I tell him while taking a few steps towards him.

He doesn't react at all for a while, so I start examining the silver collar on his neck.

The collar looks extremely delicate yet it's surprisingly tough and covered in a web of inscriptions. There is no mana stone or anything else. It's just mana-conductive metal that takes mana from its wearer and uses it to produce some sort of disrupting effect.

As I examine the collar, the man speaks to my surprise, Her name is Valery, she is my daughter.

Huh, really? She looks much older than you.

His eyes cloud, and he smiles as if remembering something funny, She never cared about her appearance nor has she ever tried to use her skills in that way. Always thought of others first.

He then looks at me, There is no use. Darren destroyed the key long ago and without it, you won't be able to

Done! I say and the collar opens with a soft click.

Shortly, I check the item.

Null Collar (Epic):Actively disrupts the wearer's magical attempts and skills, using absorbed mana to diminish both magical potency, strength, and dexterity.

How? Just how?!

What do you mean? It was affecting your mana and stats, not mine. I just needed to find a few switches and deactivate it. It wasn't that difficult.

There is no way he shakes his head, You wasted your time. I'm not going anywhere.

I move the thermal orb I had been filling for a long time and let it float in the air in front of him.

While he looks at it, I explain, If you touch the orb, it will release all of its energy. It should be able to kill you just fine.

If you stumble upon this tale on Amazon, it's taken without the author's consent. Report it.

Even while talking to him, I observe the collar. It's as good an item as I thought it would be. A really nice reward and either an upper epic or close to it.

Did you help me and remove the collar just so you could keep it? the man asks.

I ignore his question, Your daughters helped me and my disciple a few times so Im helping her in exchange, and you by extension. You now have multiple options. You can stay here and continue what you were doing. You can go out and kill Darren and others to get revenge. You can escape and find your daughter. Or you can just die if you can't live with memories of what happened, I glance at the thermal orb floating in the air.

I take a few steps away from him, Take your time if you want. The Sanctuary now has enough food to last them for a few years and find a different way. And around now everyone should be learning what they were eating.

How could you the man's voice is quiet, without any energy, Do you know how many people might die because of what you have done.

There being no need for more words I take one of the transmitters I stole and copy the frequency Granny used to contact me. Then I throw the transmitter to the man. Before he can answer, I teleport to my disciple.

Our stuff is already packed and even Vega is ready. I take the bags and throw them over my shoulders.

Vega comes closer and lifts her arms so I can lift her onto my chest.

With a sigh, I do so, and she puts her ear against my chest while I boost my body and move through the tunnels. Much faster than if she had to run.

The tunnels are empty, not a single human is there, all of the presences I can feel are in the main cave where Darren, Nina, and others who knew about the tunnel stand and talk to the people. There is screaming, there are tears, and some of them are even throwing up. Mana fills the air and the weapons have been drawn.

I reach the entrance to the sanctuary without being bothered and use mana arms to unlock the door and then carefully channel kinetic energy to force it open. The massive iron door slowly opens and I exit, closing it behind me in the same fashion.

An hour later, I'm still flying and there is no kill notification for the man down in the tunnels.

Master, I want to learn to fly too, Vega says.

We are high in the air, flying towards the north. I'm flying much slower than I'm capable of to avoid hurting her. I also get to enjoy the view this way. Currently, we are over a cloud bank watching the sunset. As far as I can see there are only clouds, lit in beautiful golden light. Even after all this time, it feels somewhat unreal and beautiful.

Maybe at around level 150 or 200, you will start flying. I slow down and float there.

The eyes of the little half-demon are wide open, she's still not used to flying, and she holds on to me like a baby koala. She is still looking around, taking it all in.

From so high everything looks so small and our problems seem unimportant, right? I move us lower and we pass through the clouds and stop right under.

As far as I can see there are mountains, hills, giant trees, and valleys. Once in a while even ruined cities from before the war. And all of it seems so small.

I'm not even level 20, Vega complains.

There is something we can do about that, I lower us and float towards the spot where I sensed the movement.

And it's as expected. The most terrifying enemy. The animals with the worst curse. Bambis curse. A group of 10 deers rests on the small clearing while two more keep watch. The guards are sending their mana senses into the forest surrounding them while their antlers shine with a pale blue color.

They are called Windrider Deer and all of them are around level twenty. That surprises me a bit, to see how low-level they are. So I fly around a bit and only then do I notice that the entire forest where they

are encompassed in inscriptions that work like the grannys setup. These inscriptions don't seem to be directed at humans so much as they are monsters and other animals.

Oh my, did we cross into someones farm?

Minion, what do you think about stealing?

She blinks a few times and then says carefully while gauging my reaction, If master is fine with

Yup, totally fine.

I don't mind it at all! She then looks around, What are we going to steal?

We have a few monsters for you to play with. There is something called Bambi's curse and it's likely to be passed from master to disciple knowing the system. So it's good for you to get experience facing this sort of monster.

C-curse?

I keep us afloat maintaining our view of the herd of deer and make my voice deeper, It all started with a single fucking deer that a girl called Tess killed. Disciple, let me tell you, even though I had no prior experience skinning an animal I believe I did very well. Yet ever since that day, this curse has been something Ive had to live with

The last deer falls dead and along with him, Vega slides against a tree. Wounds cover her body, her heart is beating wildly and there is barely any mana left inside of her.

I can choose Primary class now, master. I did it she gets out in between gasps for air. Even though she is so wounded she is happy.

You stopped checking your surroundings, I remind her again.

I can see how difficult it is for her right now, but a trickle of mana extends from her as she starts examining her surroundings again.

Her smile starts to disappear from her face when I add, Otherwise very good job.

Thank you! The smile brightens her face again immediately.

"I especially liked how you dealt with the 5th one. Cutting off a piece of its antler and gouging out its eye with it was a nice move."

"The antler was very conductive, master! I was able to extend my mana inside of its head!"

"Yes, I noticed that. It also scared the 6th deer, so that's a bonus."

"It did?"

"Yes, when you did that, the deer stopped attacking you and went on the defensive, and that was a mistake."

"Oh, I see now!"

"Anyway, for now, go through your Primary classes, and when you are done, you will tell me what you think is the best option. We will then go over the options, and you will try to defend your choice."

"Yes!"

"Meanwhile, I will do a bit of skinning and try to smoke some meat."

"Please be careful not to strengthen the curse, master!" Vega warns me before going through the options.

Chapter 295: The Bastion

We unlocked our primary classes after entering the second floor. For me, it was around level 24, if I remember correctly. Vega got offered hers at level 20.

I like Kinetic Channeler and Ether Warrior the most! my disciple says in the end.

She gets to choose between 5 classes, unlike the 10 I was offered, and that makes me wonder. Do those choices reflect things shes done? Or is there a difference between going through the tutorial and leveling with the normal system?

You like Kinetic Channeler the most because it's connected to your demon heart? I ask her.

Yes! she says without hesitation.

Damn weirdo demons, half-demons, and their obsession with hearts.

Vega continues, I like what master told me before! I want to learn how to make an antomic bomb. Mana Channeler sounds nice too, but I like using my body more.

Do you like Kinetic Channeler because you hope it will help you learn how to fly quicker? I ask again.

Yes! Once again, she answers without hesitation.

I can only sigh at that. In the end, she wants to master kinetic energy. During the fight with the deer, she used it for a split second to try to push one of the deer away. She failed, but ever since shes been practicing and trying to replicate it.

It's not a bad choice, either. The class will probably synergize well with her heart. She could use kinetic energy for attacks like me and maybe even learn to absorb kinetic energy without needing to use [Redistribution].

Vega also has enough talent to do multiple things at once, so she could find a way to synchronize it with her skills.

As for [Mana Manipulation], well, she has [Concentration] too. So just these two skills could be enough to allow her to create mana bombs or try to learn a skill similar to [Armament].

Okay, pick Kinetic Channeler.

With a big smile, she does just that and continues to read the notifications and her status.

I got a rare passive called Kinetic Storage, master! Rare! She tries to move and jump to her feet, but her wounds stop her, and she squeaks in pain. Yet, she is still smiling, My active skill is Kinetic Barrier and I even got 5 points to mana and two to every other stat!

That sounds like a defensive skill, surprisingly, but damn, Kinetic Storage sure sounds good. I should look for a similar epic passive later. Even though I got Mana Reservoir so long ago I still consider it the strongest epic passive I have. If the passives have low, mid, and upper grading like items, then Mana Reservoir is for sure upper.

We will test them later; for now, rest.

Then, even though I told her to get some rest, I watch as she starts testing her skills. I'm not even surprised.

She uses her Kinetic Barrier, and this creates a thin, skin-tight layer over her skin. Vega takes out a knife and prods at the barrier with the handle. I watch as the barrier gives a bit, and when I activate my Mana Wavelength Irises, I can see how the attack disperses. Some of the attacks energy even seems to be absorbed by what I think is her passive.

At the moment, I think the passive works like my Mana Reservoir and will allow her to store and use stored kinetic energy for attacks. In the future, she could use it to strengthen her body or maybe do something with her heart.

So far, so good. What she lacks is a ranged attack, but we will try to do something about that.

I leave her to her training and open the community.

Savant (Hell, Alone) -

NotAaron (Hell, group 4) -oh, come on!

Knight (Hell, group 4) -as if you didn't expect that answer.

NotDennis (Hell, group 4) -we just need Noname to beat up Savant during the tournament. I bet that will make Savant a bit less cocky.

Savant (Hell, Alone) -You're free to try. I don't mind if you attack me all at once, either.

NotAaron (Hell, group 4) -ha! You just cleared the 4th floor, and we have been on the 5th one for nearly two weeks already!

Sset (Hell, group 4) - NotAaron, don't forget that it means Savant killed one of the Calamities alone.

Savant (Hell, Alone) - Why would I only kill one Calamity?

NotDennis (Hell, group 4) -well, fuck.

Noname (Hell, group 4) - mana is the best stat.

FoodFood (Hell, group 4) - food!

Noname (Hell, group 4) - Food is not a stat, Biscuit.

Stolen story; please report.

FoodFood (Hell, group 4) - FOOD!

What?! Really?

Savant (Hell, Alone) - At least that corgi makes more sense than some of the Group 4 members.

Noname (Hell, group 4) - How do you like the 5th floor so far?

Savant (Hell, Alone) - Not very much, to be honest. I'm still waiting for my disciple, so I can gauge things properly.

Noname (Hell, group 4) - I think you will be surprised.

I let Group 4 bully Savant a bit longer and then disconnect from the community. That reminds me that I should probably check easy and other difficulties once in a while. There could be more information to be had.

I glance toward the deer meat hanging on sticks made of mana, I've placed a few thermal orbs nearby, in an attempt to dry the meat. It probably won't be as good as properly smoked meat, but I used some spices I brought from the 4th floor, so it shouldn't be terrible. Sure, it's not like we are lacking food at the moment, but it's fun to try.

Just like my disciple, I refuse to slack off and so I'm examining my body, trying to figure out how to use black mana more. I've also been keeping a small orb of black mana at my side at all times. I force it under my [Mana Domain] and keep trying to learn more.

A few days ago, before the fight with the Veil Guardian, I did another round of active tempering, which gained me 15 stats in constitution, 5 in dexterity, and 5 in strength. One point in mana, too. That made me even happier.

My stats are looking nice as always:

Lvl 218

Strength: 108

Dexterity: 106

Constitution: 261

Mana (Stage 1/3 - Vast Mana): 856 + 856

I also have close to 12 thousand shards that Ive decided to keep. I don't know what awaits me in the Valley or in the Bastion, so I want to have them ready. It also might be a good idea to start saving them for a time when I can buy items and passives of higher than epic rarity.

My pinkie cracks and twists, a rush of mana tearing it apart as I lose control for a moment while trying to control the black orb.

As quickly as I can, I reduce my output and check on Vega. Thankfully, she seems fine. I got hurt even with my passives and control because of the amount of mana I'm using, so I'd rather be careful. I start again, more carefully this time.

Both of us spend a few hours training like that until I collect some of the food and pack it.

Vega lifts her arms in the air, and I grab her under the armpits and lift her onto my chest where she nestles her head against my chest. Once in a while, her tiny horn pokes my chin or neck, but I decide to let it go.

Examining the map etched onto the small mana stone, I fly towards the Bastion. I avoid the places marked as dangerous zones the domains of strong monsters, ruins of old cities with active weapons, or

places where the Veil is particularly active. Some of the places I'm avoiding are as big as small countries, zones where Champion-level opponents clashed, the only things left behind, mana radiation, and remnants of skills.

I mean, damn, even after a hundred years or something like that, these places are dangerous enough to kill people. They probably aren't dangerous to more powerful individuals, but it's still telling. If given the opportunity, I should check on them without Vega present.

Our flight continues like that until we reach the mountain behind which the Bastion lies. I notice Vega starting to get cold, so I generate and release a small amount of thermal energy, and that makes her cling to me even more.

When I meet her eyes, she averts her gaze. I'm sorry, master. She weakens her hold a bit.

I don't mind, I tell her.

Her ruby colored eyes shine for a moment, and she holds me tighter again. She is just like a little animal. A baby koala clinging to her mother. I'm not too dumb to understand that.

Vega has grown up on the streets alone. She is half-demon, and most of the humans in her village hated her for it. She doesn't have anyone to rely on. And she's what? 6 years old? She's just a little kid. It makes sense that she's starved for warmth.

She reminds me a little of Lily, who has similar tendencies, and that makes me wonder if Lily doesn't have a similar past. At this point, I wouldn't even be surprised if all of the group 4 were a bit twisted like that. Everyone other than me, of course. I'm the most normal person here. It's the rest of group 4 that just can't stop being scary.

As I'm thinking about these things, I pass over one of the larger rocks and finally catch sight of the Bastion. Just as Nina described it in our conversations.

The Bastion is what used to be called a Skyhold Bastion, a floating island if you will. An island big enough to house around fifty thousand people. Skyhold Bastions were mostly used for war before the collapse or as guild halls for powerful guilds. Some even served as houses for the rich.

Very few pieces of information were left behind, and theres barely anyone left from before the war. And all of it was caused by the Veil.

So there it is, the Bastion. It has fallen to the ground, nestled in between two mountains, one of which has partially collapsed into the city. The stones have buried around 20% of the Bastion.

The base of this floating island is a perfect half-sphere with giant circuits on the bottom and countless smaller ones. Even from afar, I can see that the circuits are made from a different, crystalline material while the rest of the base is made of white stone.

There are even a few of the original buildings left standing in the Bastion. A tower in the middle and a few more all over the fallen island. There are a lot of structures built by the people who currently live there, and most of them have been made of wood or stone.

The entire Bastion is slightly tilted to the left, and even from our distance, its presence feels overwhelming.

Yes, there are stats and people dozens or hundreds of times stronger. People with skills, items, and other stuff. So building something like this probably isn't as impossible a task as it would be on Earth. But still, it's hard to take it all in. The Bastions diameter is probably on par with the length of Central Park or the Golden Gate Bridge? It's hard to say.

I glance at Vega who cant stop staring at it, her mouth drops open and her eyes spread wide. It's a funny sight, so I etch it into my memory.

When I look around, there doesnt seem to be anything too interesting. Ahead sits a few more mountains and a grassy plain with a few trees leading up to the Bastion. To the right, stand still more mountains, and behind them, I can sense immense mana. Yup, even as far away as I am, I can feel the mana from the Valley.

When I activate my eyes I can see it, a dark cloud or thick mist that hangs inertly over the Valley, which is multiple times the size of the Bastion. And the sheer density of that mana is something else.

I poke Vega, Keep checking your surroundings, minion. And you forgot to control your heart. Try to not get hurt.

Maybe I got Bambi's curse, just like master! the little half-demon says smugly.

I notice that she starts doing what I told her and scanning our surroundings.

As a reward, I poke her squishy cheek, It doesn't work like that. Anyways, let's check the Bastion.

Yes!

Chapter 296: Rebellious phase

Darren warned me before to be careful approaching the Bastion. Apparently, some of its old defenses still work and are powerful enough to kill higher-leveled monsters and humans. There is even a rumor that it once defended against a Veil Guardian. Yup, there are multiple Veil Guardians, and the one that kicked my ass is just one of many.

Well, before this floor ends, I will pay him a visit, so it's fine. I'm totally not pissed off, nope. I'm totally not bottling it under my [Focus]. I'm totally fine.

Anyway, [Focus] is totally the best skill.

I place another mana projectile and, with Vega in hand, I jump to the side. A barrier I create deflects the attack, and I disrupt another one. I sense another presence under my feet, as it gets closer, I stomp, releasing a burst of kinetic energy from my feet.

[You have defeated Corpse eater - lvl 99]

[You have defeated Corpse eater - lvl 89]

I manipulate my mana slowly so Vega can watch, and surround us in it. It radiates gently around us, as I make sure to keep it from hurting my disciple. I form the mana I've released into a set of armor twice my height, lifting us into the air, and suspending us in the chest of the armor. I haven't had an opportunity

to show off my mana mech until now. I encompass it in my [Mana Domain] and control it with [Mana Manipulation].

I don't even use [Infusion], even at this level it should be enough. I move us, using an arm to grab the monster, which spews an acid-like substance at it, slightly corroding the mana.

Then I send a signal to the hand, and it closes, crushing the monster.

[You have defeated Poiseater - lvl 123]

Another poisonous attack lands on the chest of the armor but doesn't manage to reach Vega or me. I take a few steps, moving to intercept a monster that reminds me of a horribly mutated frog with six thin limbs.

The brave monster doesn't run. Either too proud or dumb to bother, it keeps spewing its acid onto my armor, corroding some of the mana and creating some sort of vapor. It continues to do so even as I lift a leg, and its final attack collides with the sole of my oversized boot.

Then I stomp on the monster, its blood splattering the surroundings.

[You have defeated Poiseater - lvl 113]

"Minion, if you ever do what this monster just did, I will be extremely disappointed."

"I'm not that dumb!" she states indignantly, as I dissolve the armor surrounding us after dispersing the poisonous vapor with kinetic energy.

"So, what would you do?"

"I would run away! And then track you to your camp, and wait for you to sleep."

Nice! Killing a powerful opponent in their sleep. A classic.

Vega continues, "If I were that monster I would use that poison to poison master's food!"

Huh? That's a bit...

"Or I would poison master while he bathed or examined a new item."

"Okay, okay, let's stop here."

"Sure!" The scary half-demon turns her attention back to her heart and the mana stone in her hands.

I place another mana projectile nearby, bringing the total to a hundred.

Once again, another annoying monster appears nearby, and once again, my curiosity compels me to meet it. The monster in question is as tall as me, with long limbs, and a thin scaled body. Yet its the monsters head that stands out most, gazing at me with five eyes and saliva dripping from the rows of pointed teeth filling its oversized mouth.

[Skillreaver - lvl 152]

The creepy monster continues to observe, each of its eyes trained on me, big and red with snake-like pupils at their centers.

I feel its mana reach toward me, trying to get through my mantle and reaching for my disciple.

I disrupt both attempts with ease, but then, curiosity overwhelms me, and I weaken my mantle.

Slowly, something touches me, and I observe as it searches for something. Clearly, it's the monster's skill.

Then the touch disappears, and the monster starts radiating mana, blue armor surrounding it. Something akin to [Armament] I used to have before [Regalia].

Wordlessly, the monster charges at me, and before it takes two steps, I create a mana orb and launch it at the monster. The orb pierces through the armor and the monster's head, exiting on the other side.

[You have defeated Skillreaver - lvl 152]

Nice, another douche of a monster copying skills.

Taking a few steps, I stop in front of the body and examine the monster a moment before leaving it and heading towards the Bastion. I try to stay covert, reducing my mana signature as much as I can while covering for my silly disciple as well. I even try to stay out of sight as much as possible, using the patch of forest to get closer.

Even though I knew the Bastion was massive, it feels even up close. I can already see the small figures of humans, mostly on the walls surrounding the fallen Skyward Bastion.

Getting ready, I send a signal to one of the mana projectiles I left behind, and it shoots toward the city.

It doesn't contain any energy; and neither do the others, it's just slightly compressed mana.

As it flies through the air, I watch its trajectory, and when it reaches the Bastion, a small hexagonal barrier appears to block it. It also causes a few of the guards to start looking around. The signal is sent into the area from somewhere in the middle of the city. It searches for mana signatures, and I avoid detection.

Then I activate five projectiles at once, each of them shooting towards the city. Just like before, a small hexagonal barrier as tall as me appears in front of each of the projectiles and blocks it, disappearing right after.

I see, so it's like Virelias setup. A barrier with thousands of segments that only activate when blocking an attack. Inactive for the most part to save mana.

I launch twenty more projectiles all at once, and this time I observe with my trait as the projectiles touch something akin to a dense web of mana, triggering the barriers.

All of the projectiles get blocked once more, and I notice a few humans hurriedly moving on the walls. They are shouting something, probably, and a few more detections are sent into the area.

If you spot this tale on Amazon, know that it has been stolen. Report the violation.

I send 50 projectiles at once and watch as they clash against hexagonal barriers.

To be honest, it's a nice view as they light up one after another, often only for a split second to block the attack. This system is extremely accurate.

Even more, humans appear on the wall, to my amusement, their movements display growing panic and stress.

Damn, that only makes me want to continue.

I shoot three attacks. Each a second apart, each of them aimed at the same spot.

Once they get detected, I release the rest of the projectiles, directing them all at the same spot as well, and once again they get blocked. But this time it seems like my attacks passed a bit closer to the city, if only slightly.

Three more detection waves wash over me, and like ants, dozens of humans rush onto the walls, skills active and searching for the attacker.

They seem angry, Vega seems to notice as well.

It's fine, I tell her as I watch them grouping up, getting ready to send small groups of scouts into the area, Nina said they have items that allow them to enter the Bastion, so we have to lure some of them out.

Isn't master trying to be nicer? We could move closer and ask them to let us in

Minion, leave thinking to me.

I'm Vega, not minion. I think master just wanted to test their barrier and bully them but screwed up.

It's a scientifically confirmed fact that minions don't have the ability to think for themselves. That's why they should listen to their master.

That's not true! I know master just wants to be an asshole!

You are not allowed to use the word 'asshole' starting now, minion.

Asshole.

What? Is she getting into a rebellious phase?

Asshole. She repeats.

Do not

Asshole asshole asshole. Her red eyes seem to challenge me.

Minion, you screwed up.

I'm Vega, first disciple to Nathaniel Gwyn, my only master. I am not a minion! I will be calling master an asshole if the master continues to call me a minion!

That's it, this surely is the rebellious phase I heard so much about. But I think the little half-demon underestimates how petty I can be. Oh boy, she has no idea.

Sure, minion, go ahead. I highlight the word 'minion' strongly.

Will do so, asshole master! And the little red-eyed half-demon returns my gaze, both of us full of determination.

We spend a few hours going around the Bastion and waiting, yet even then no one leaves the fallen sky island.

My plan has failed, dang it.

I straight up refuse to look at my disciple and force her to practice more. While waiting, I also push her into a fight against a few weaker monsters. Her kinetic barrier skill seems somewhat decent and works a lot like [Redistribution]. The disadvantage is that it only works against physical attacks, so we are working on that.

There are multiple quests for me to fulfill. Not the least of which being the floor quest.

Floor quest:

Rise and protect your disciple

Rewards:

???

Skill upgrade token

5000 Shards

100 stat points

Trait strengthening token

And plenty of side quests:

Side quest: Find out what happened to this world

Reward: 5000 shards

Side quest: Locate the mirror

Reward: ???

Side quest: Avoid the sleeping Calamity

Reward: Survival

Side quest: Find out what's causing the high mana levels in the Valley

Reward: Mid-epic piece of equipment

Side quest: Reach the Bastion

Reward: Food and water supplies

Side quest: Reach level 250

Reward: Body upgrade

Maybe I can find more information about what exactly happened. I have some ideas and I got plenty of hints in the Sanctuary, but that's not enough for the system, so that's going to take a bit longer. The mirror is in the Valley, I can deal with it after going there.

I will also try to avoid the sleeping Calamity. The first on the list is Veil Guardian. Some suspicious sleeping Calamity can wait.

Mid-epic equipment will be nice too. They cost around 5 thousand shards or more, so that's telling of how dangerous the Valley is. Maybe the sleeping Calamity is there?

As for the Bastion, looking at it from up close, I really want to examine it. Like the bunker that made up the Sanctuary, it is a remnant of the past. If less obsolete than an abandoned bunker. The circuits made of crystal covering the entire bottom of the fallen flying island interest me. Oh, and how many facilities might there be? Maybe they'll be even better for crafting and enchanting than the Sanctuaries.

My hopes of sneaking in have failed. I wanted to use the items that allow the residents to pass through the detection field without triggering an attack, but they don't leave.

Sneaking inside on my own could be somewhat possible with my eyes and [Resonance], but after examining it for a while, I'm sure I would trigger a trap or two. I don't think I would be able to sneak Vega in either.

Even shooting a mana orb with an anchor placed on it won't work.

The Skyhold Bastion seems really advanced with plenty of surprises. Built by the Enchanter Guild that created the Veil long ago. Should we wait and hope they forget about the attack and then try to gain entry in the usual, if annoying fashion even though dealing with so many people would piss me off?

Did I screw up just because I didn't want to deal with people?

Nah, it's the extroverts who are wrong.

Asshole's disciple, we will try to get inside in the usual way.

I'm not a minio she looks up at me, what did you call me?

For every day you dont lose concentration and keep watch over your surroundings, I will call you Vega for a day, I tell her instead of answering.

Her big red eyes expand even more, and she gulps.

In exchange, if you fail, I will call you minion, and you can't complain or call me an asshole, I expand on it, I mean, you can refuse if you dont think you can. I will understand if you are scared and don't believe in your

I will do it!

Ha, so easy to deal with! You are still way too young to compare to Nathaniel Gwyn!

But if I catch master losing his concentration because of some inscription or item, you have to call me Vega and I can ask you for something!

Huh?

I glance towards the Bastion which is most likely full of wonder and remember the times I lost track of my surroundings.

This could be a bit dangerous.

A smug smile appears on my minions face, I understand if my master is scared.

Chapter 297: Sneaky mode

Is Vega taking too many cues from me? Sure, Ive noticed her copying a bit of my behavior, but this is too much.

Maybe it's her demon part? Demons seem to be obsessed with strong hearts and beings. Maybe she sees these things in me and instinctively tries to emulate me. No matter what she went through or how she behaves at times, she is still just a kid, so it makes sense.

Well, whatever, another thing for future Nathaniel to deal with. Hes done nothing so far, well he couldn't really, so he can deal with this at least. Screw you, future Nathaniel, I bet you will be an even bigger weirdo.

With Vega in my arms and mana flowing under my skin, I head towards the Bastion.

Sneaky Mode is on once again, the same one I used against Nina and Darren. Yup, I'm once again just another normal guy with a totally normal mana.

POV Vega

As always, the master's heart beats strong and calmly. He is not scared at all, not even when so many humans look at him and scream at us to stop. His heart doesn't even react. It's just one calm, confident beat after another.

I look up to him and, as always, he wears the expression he puts on when were with others. It's colder, and his eyes look different. It's hard to notice, but Ive learned how!

While he talks with some weak human, I continue to send my senses into our surroundings. I can't sense it, but I'm sure the master is trying to catch me hesitating.

I'm sure of it!

I will do the same. My master can get distracted when he finds an interesting item or gets an idea to improve his skills.

It's fun, and I'm thankful to the master. Ive never gotten to play like this before. Even if I fail, it won't get hurt, and I won't go hungry. The master is just that kind.

One of the humans asks, Someone attacked the Bastion just a few hours ago, do you know anything?

Even though this human is so weak, he looks down on my master. I think the only reason hes so brave is because he has so many people backing him up, but I want master to show him his place.

Attack? We just got here. A few hours ago, we were still scouting to avoid all the monsters. Maybe one of them attacked? he replies. His pretty eyes show not an ounce of hesitation.

Sure you did, the man snorts, where are you from?

I came from the Sanctuary. Do you know Darren or Nina? They were both here in the Bastion, ten years ago. I have a few items to trade and I left some food back in camp for trading.

Their names sound familiar, but I can't remember everyone. Okay, you said your name is Nathaniel, right? Well send you to customs, you will pay for your stay in the Bastion and you will get a three-day pass. After that, you will either leave or go through customs again. According to your behavior or usefulness, we will decide what to do with you.

Thanks, sir, that sounds very reasonable.

I think so too, the man answers and turns to one of his men.

When I look at my master, hes still releasing mana in that weird way. It's hard for me to describe, but it feels very scary. It shows how amazingly good at controlling mana the master is. He did it before too, while talking with the human flesh-eaters, Nina and Darren, and now the master is doing it again.

I'm not sure why the master calls it Sneaky Mode when I can see how much it scares some of the humans, but there must be a deep meaning behind it.

Master is smart and powerful and I want to be like him. I'm already trying to learn Sneaky Mode but it's so difficult.

"Sneaky Mode successful," Master whispers as we pass through the gate, and I nod and smile.

It's so much fun being around master.

Well, that was easier than expected. Some of the guards with better mana senses seemed a bit scared, so maybe the attack from before made them a bit nervous. Not my problem anyway; their commander can deal with it.

As for entering the Bastion, I expected them to be more careful given that they don't know me at all. But maybe they have some other defenses for dealing with stronger people if they should try to start a fight. Maybe the defenses did drive off one of the Veil Guardians years ago. Better be careful while I'm here with Vega.

I also force myself not to examine the barrier. If it works even a bit like the Veil, it could detect my touch and cause me trouble.

But at least I completed the quest and can now get some food and water. Not like I need them, but I could sell them.

"Touch this stone; it will measure your physical stats and mana," the man accompanying me through the gate points at the stone. He says somewhat respectfully.

There are a few more men around us, and all of them are ready. The stone they are pointing at is embedded in the wall and perfectly flush. It looks like it's made from transparent white glass.

Let's be careful. I need to control my mana a bit. Okay, maybe a lot, not just a bit. It seems like people over level 200 are usually the ones who survived the war, and survivors rarely reach that level because of the Veil so I can try to act like someone born after the war.

When my hand touches the stone, I quickly grab a hold of my mana and cycle it, letting as little as possible pass into the stone.

"Strength is at around 100," one of the men says after checking some item in his hands.

"That's low for a traveler," another one answers.

"Dexterity is at a similar level," the first man reads again.

"Man, you are brave, leaving the safe zones with such low stats," the man writing it down giggles, "how are his other stats?"

"Constitution is around 250."

I continue to control my mana and, rather than fear being caught, I'm curious to find out if I can hide it from this item. And I can't help but wonder how it works. Items like this always interest me. Its inscriptions are interesting and the way it examines my body is someth...

"Master failed; you stopped watching your surroundings," Vega whispers.

Stolen content alert: this content belongs on Royal Road. Report any occurrences.

Huh? In shock, I realize that she is right and my concentration slips a little more.

"Your mana stat is"

A rift appears in the air, and a man steps out. He is tall, well-dressed, and wears a light confident smile on his lips. His hair is brown and wavy, growing down to his shoulders, and has a well-kept mustache.

"Greetings, brave guards," he says with a friendly smile.

"The Butler!" the guards immediately ignore me and turn to the man, bowing their heads.

"It's fine, no need to be so formal," he takes a few steps towards the man with the item that showed the results of the test and grabs it from his hands.

He does something to it and then returns it, "You may continue with his registration, and after that, I will take care of our guest. Procedures are important," he smiles.

His clothes are neat and fitting. Suit-like and nice brown in color. Meanwhile, the guards are wearing something that I identified as mostly low-grade rare armor. Simple, but covering most of their bodies.

"Yes sir!" the man takes the tablet-like item and continues, "Mana stat is at around 170. The overall level is estimated to be 150, registering Nathaniel Gwyn as a level 3 threat. The pass will last exactly three days starting now. The price will be"

"You can put the price of their entrance on my tab."

"The price will be paid by Sir Butler at a later date. Am I correct in thinking that Mister Gwyn will receive his entrance token from Sir Butler personally?" he asks carefully, and the Butler nods, "Now then if you allow me to measure your companion."

At that, I let them take Vega off my hands and look towards the Butler.

The man greets me with a nod while he patiently waits for our registration to finish. When it's done, Vega seems to be disappointed by being registered as a level 1 threat.

When we start walking deeper into the Bastion, the Butler walks by my side.

"Did I screw up?" I ask him.

"It's hard to trick an essence probe, Mister Gwyn," he smiles.

In front of us, the Bastion opens up.

The streets are tilted as are the buildings because of how the island has fallen. But they are clean, and there are people everywhere. Every single one of them looks well fed and groomed, even though we seem to be in the poorer parts of the Bastion. They go about their day, trading, joking, meeting, and working. I can hear a blacksmith nearby, I sense like an enchanter. There are even training facilities, not unlike schools.

It's a city nestled within the remains of a previous civilization.

"Mister Gwyn, would you like to join me and Madame Housekeeper tonight? We won't be taking too much of your time," the man asks.

"Yes, we can do that." I agree, my curiosity peaked.

The man bows slightly and hands me entrance tokens for Vega and me, "Thank you, I will send someone to the place where you decide to stay. Have a nice rest of the day." He turns to Vega, "Miss Vega," he adds.

[Phase Ranger - lvl ??]

So at least 20 levels higher than me, but probably not much more.

Butler, Housekeeper, such strange titles. What's next? Gardener, Tutor, Maid, Valet?

"So how do you like everything far, Vega?" I ask her.

The moment I do so, she tries really, really hard to hide her smile. I lost, and I can accept it. I just got so enthralled by the item measuring me that I stopped scouting my surroundings. Even though Ive complained about Vega doing the same so often.

Well, it's just one day, and my dear minion will surely slip up after that, and I will have my revenge.

"He called me miss! No one ever calls me miss!"

"That's good, but don't trust him just because of that. He is probably very dangerous." You just can't trust anyone with such a majestic mustache. It should be criminal, rocking a mustache like that and still looking so good.

"I don't! I only trust master."

"Good."

Im already drained by all the people walking through the streets, so I ask an older woman for a place to find lodging. Then I spend five minutes answering her questions. Stuff like, "We didn't get a mana courier or traveling merchants, is the wilderness getting dangerous? Oh, The Sanctuary, how is it nowadays? Who is this cute little girl? Are you married, young man, I have a daughter"

Things like that.

In the end, she shows me a kind of symbol that people draw on their houses when they want to offer a room for the night, and so we walk through the streets, searching for one. I pass by a few because I don't like the location, but deeper in the city, I find a nice one. In one of the original towers.

The moment we enter it, I know it will probably be expensive, but I don't mind that much. The inside is big without being empty and it feels nice and cozy. There are mana stones all around for heating, inactive, and ready to be used when needed.

People here are generally better clothed than those outside, and even average levels are slightly higher. Most of them seem like they know how to fight.

We reach the bar where a woman glances at me, "Token," she says simply.

I take our entrance tokens and put them on the table.

She examines them, "Entrance token, three days. So you two are new to the Bastion. Are the roads as bad as they say?"

Huh? Not really. Just a few level-two-hundred monsters and mostly lower-level ones. But such an answer would probably get an annoying level of attention.

"Even worse than what you heard. Monsters are everywhere," I complain. "We barely made it here."

The woman nods solemnly, "Damned monsters. It's been years since the courier guild was able to get any rare spices to the Bastion, and people keep asking for them," she sighs. "Single room, two beds?"

"Yes, with a nice view if you have any."

"What can you pay?"

"Plenty, what do you prefer? It's my first time in the Bastion."

"Oh really, welcome. If anyone talks shit, forgive them; we are not too used to travelers. As for the payment, an uncommon item, a higher end mana stone, a piece of conductive crystal or rare metal ore, even some rare monster parts."

"Would this be ok?" I place one of the worst mana stones that I have in front of her, which I've inscribed to radiate heat.

"Oh, a heating stone, and its really well made. Probably from before the war, people nowadays are rarely capable of this," she glances at me. "This single stone is too much, but I can give you one of the rooms on the highest floor and add dinners and breakfast, and a few baths. Sounds good?"

"Sure," something tells me that she might be scamming me a little, but not like I mind.

It also seems to tell her something about me, being willing to part with such a valuable item, and her behavior seems a bit more respectful.

"Fabian, get your ass over here and take this good sir to room four, and make sure they get some food delivered to them."

Led by a young boy, we walk upstairs and receive a mana stone to unlock the door, and we enter the room.

There is a rug on the floor and two beds, a big one and a smaller one in the corner. The furniture is nice, if simple, and the room is a little worn but its well-kept and clean.

I let Vega examine a mirror on the wall and open the balcony. There is a flower pot with a smaller tree and two chairs next to a small table. The view doesnt face the middle of the city, where the higher towers and buildings are. Rather it faces the outside. It overlooks the smaller buildings and all the people below.

I can see the small wall surrounding the city and the nature outside of it. When I look to the left, I can see most of one of the mountains that surround the city. At least I'm lucky enough to find places with a nice view.

After returning to the room, I jump into the bed.

"Minio Vega, tell me why being around so many people drains me."

"Maybe it is Bambi's curse, master!"

"Maybe. But I don't want much. A place to become stronger, and level up my skills and stats. Some interesting items to play with and places to explore. Most of the time people are an inconvenience, especially when they decide to bother me."

"Even me?" She asks as she climbs onto the bed and lays next to me.

"Nah, youre fine."

"I see!" she smiles happily. "But I couldn't notice it at all. Master is really good at talking with people."

"Silly disciple, there are two kinds of people. The ones that become stronger the more time they spend with other people. Then those that grow weaker when they have to socialize and then need to recharge their energy. I'm the latter."

"Maybe there are passive skills or traits for that."

I just poke my cheeky disciple and when she jumps from the bed to examine the room I go through the system shop.

Just in case.

Chapter 298: What is Pairing

Were training as night falls when a knock at the door breaks my focus. As I come to a stopping point, I poke Vega and head towards the door. I open it to find a man standing there, neatly dressed and presenting us with two sets of clothes on hangers.

Your clothes, Mister Gwyn, Miss Vega, he hands them to me as if there were no chance of refusal, I shall wait outside and escort you to your appointment with Sir Butler and Lady Housekeeper.

After that, he closes the door and waits outside.

Me and Vega look at each other. Our clothes are more or less clean, and we even took baths, so that shouldnt be a problem.

Im about to toss them aside and head out as I am when I notice Vegas bright eyed gaze, directed at the pretty yellow dress meant for her. Even at a glance, I can tell that it will fit her well.

With a sigh, I hand her the clothes. Just for tonight, I will humor my silly disciple. She is constantly training, beyond even my expectations. So yup, it's a reward for that, nothing else.

Do you know how to put them on?

She looks confused, so I take a moment to explain and then send her to the other room so she can put them on.

Meanwhile, I examine mine. Its basically a simplified version of the elegant suit I wore to the auction on the fourth floor. The clothes are woven from a thin cloth with a slight amount of give, making for an extremely comfortable fit. They are light gray with a black vest underneath and a touch of golden embroidery. Even the shoes are black and trimmed in gold.

Well, Ill just wear them tonight and sell them afterward.

After getting ready, I wait for Vega, and she exits the room a moment later, her movements awkward and shy.

She wears a pretty yellow dress with a hint of white trim. Its a simple style made from quality materials. The outfit complements her light brown hair and makes her red eyes even more striking while complimenting her tiny black horns. She is also wearing a new pair of shoes. They look sleek and comfortable while perfectly matching the dress.

I mean, Biscuit is clearly the cutest being that ever entered the tutorial, but Vega is cute in her own way.

Come here, I tap on one of the stools, and the little half-demon climbs onto it.

I take a few steps, grab a brush from the dresser, and start brushing her hair. At the first touch, Vega freezes, and I sense her kinetic demon heart starts beating wildly, but after a moment, she realizes what's happening. Still tense, she allows me to continue.

I used to brush my sisters hair. She always acted like she didnt need it, but she liked it anyway, I tell Vega. One time I annoyed her, and she forced me to learn all kinds of ways to tie her hair and style it.

I set the brush aside and grab another, taking care not to pull her hair.

What kind of person is masters sister? Is she like you?

Like me? I take a moment to think about it, I think so? But she is a few years older than me and more decisive and stubborn.

She sounds like a strong person.

Yes, she is.

Is master scared of her?

That almost makes me laugh. Vic would sooner set the world ablaze than hurt those she cares about. Without responding, I use my hands to style Vegas hair. It doesnt even reach her shoulders, so there is not much I can do.

We are done. Time to head out. As I said before, always stay near me, you can stop scanning the area and probing people. It might be considered rude. Do not touch anything or anyone, and do not attack anyone. You are Vega, I'm Nathaniel. We are travelers, and we stopped by the Sanctuary, were headed north. According to the map, there should be a few more bunkers and survivors. We did not attack the Bastion, we are not heading towards the Valley. We never saw a group of deer and did not kill them.

Yes!

Good, let's go then, I open the door, and the man leads us outside.

We pass through the streets without haste. The man takes the lead with his hands folded behind his back, and the people on the street seem to recognize him. The streets are empty, and even when we meet someone, that person quickly clears the way, and not even the guards bother to stop us.

Eventually, we reach an inner wall that is thrice my height, and the gate opens for us, revealing a beautiful garden and a sidewalk made of beautiful white stone, framed by vibrant green grass. All well lit by a soft light shining from lamps placed along our path.

Following the sidewalk, we move uphill, heading towards yet another wall made of the same kind of stone as the sidewalk and covered in beautiful murals. A vibrant blend of blues, greens, and yellows. The figures depict everything from fights, and floating islands, to exotic places and animals.

Even though there is so much of it, it doesn't feel like any of it is too much or out of place; each of the paintings is placed perfectly to create the intended effect.

The next gate isn't even guarded and opens to reveal a straight road leading to the manor at the center. The manor itself has several walls made entirely from glass, a red roof made of some sort of stone, and a multitude of light blue crystalline pillars. There are a few more buildings off to the sides, each different from the last.

This is as far as I will be going, please enjoy your evening Miss Vega, Mister Gwyn, the servant that led us here bows and leaves, the sound of his steps filling the otherwise quiet night.

Stolen story; please report.

Vega, doesn't he feel like a douchebag to you? I ask my disciple while watching the man leave.

Yes, like a douchebag! she then hesitates, What does douchebag mean?

It means an obnoxious, offensive, or disgusting person. But I'm not sure if that poor man deserves to be called that, a woman exits the manor we've been guided to. It's nice to meet you Miss Vega, Mister Gwyn, she says with the slightest hint of a smile and bow.

The woman is as tall as me, with a slim figure, and moves with an energetic sort of grace. She has wavy black hair and violet eyes complemented by her pale blue dress. She doesn't seem to be armed, and yet she displays confidence on par with the Butler.

I'm the Housekeeper, allow me to welcome you to the Bastion. Shall we head inside?

[Ethereal Duelist - lvl ??]

Sure, I answer simply, but the woman doesn't seem insulted and moves first.

Each of her movements is sharp and dangerous, like those of someone accustomed to fighting using their body, which her class confirms.

So the Butler is a ranged class, and the Housekeeper is close range. If it comes to a fight, I will have to use barriers to defend while I fight the woman. The two of them are probably 20-30 levels higher than me, so it feels like it should be manageable, the only problems are Vega and whatever defenses they have on hand.

The man with the criminally majestic mustache is already inside and greets us as well, as they lead us to the table. All of it feels extremely pretentious and boring. I was never the type to care about this kind of stuff, but I go with it for now.

After taking my seat at the table, Vega moves to my right, while the housekeeper is opposite of me, and the Butler to my left.

At least the food is good and safe to eat.

In the middle of the dinner, the conversation finally starts.

I have noticed the signature of an item when you entered the Bastion, Mister Gwyn, the Butler starts, Tens of years ago, we gifted a similar item to Darrens predecessor. A silver collar. The man pokes a piece of meat and puts it into his mouth. Each of his movements is smooth and elegant, even the way he sits.

Interesting story. I found something similar, I think then it was on cattle I met by chance.

Cattle, you say. I wonder what happened to it.

Me too. I just set it free after taking the collar. I take my glass, and while drinking, I make sure to slurp slightly.

The man doesn't react to the provocation.

Vega copies me instantly and she starts slurping from her glass, just much louder than me. That makes every one of us look at her, and she blushes and quickly looks down at the table.

That cattle probably had owners; I wonder what could happen to them. Such cattle can be really dangerous, the Butler continues.

I wonder that too, I say.

"I see. Well, to change the subject, I have noticed a blade

The Housekeeper finally joins the conversation, Damn it, Butler, your eloquent behavior sometimes makes me want to punch you in the face, she sighs and turns from the man to me, I'm a warrior, and unlike my colleague here, I'm not patient enough for these conversations, and its only taken me a second to guess you arent either.

I lift my glass towards the woman and take a sip.

That makes her smile. She is still sitting there elegantly. Her shoulders peeking from her pale blue dress, displaying her body as the deadly weapon it is, yet she throws a part of that mask away.

That Voidsteel blade you have can be only from one being, so I wonder. Did you acquire it by chance or did you earn it?

Nothing has changed, but something tells me the way I answer the question is extremely important.

Well, I don't think they will answer all of my questions, so let's make an offer to ensure at least a few of them get answered.

You can ask three questions, and I will ask three. You can decide not to answer, and I may as well, but we will try to answer three questions for everyone. Does that sound reasonable? I offer.

This time it's the Butler who answers, That much would be appreciated. And please forgive my colleague; she is perfectly capable of behaving herself but tends to slip up. A holdover from a time when she was but a simple brute.

Come on, Butler, our guest doesn't care, even the kid is getting bored. Plus, he isn't from here; there is no need for decorum.

I understand, Housekeeper, I will keep decorum, but you shall behave a bit less proper to please our guest. As for our first question, Mister Gwyn, I repeat, where did you get that Voidsteel blade? If you give us a longer answer instead of a simple one, we will be more considerate in answering your questions.

I fought the Veil Guardian in the city near the Sanctuary. I was able to sever the guardian's arm and take the blade. The monster is still alive, but I will change that in the future.

Ha! I told you, Butler! You didn't trust me, but I know men like him. Just looking at him, I can tell that he didn't just steal it or find it!

The Butler looks at the Housekeeper for a moment, almost disappointed by her inelegant behavior before turning to me.

As he speaks, I watch his mustache move. It's like a living being, The Veil Guardians are powerful opponents, so allow me to congratulate you on your skill or luck, Mister Gwyn. I believe it was a tough fight.

[Focus - lvl 45 > Focus - lvl 46]

A little bit, I nod. It's my turn, so I want to ask. What happened to lead to all of this? I may as well try to get those 5 thousand shards.

The two of them exchange glances but do not ask anything; instead, it's the Housekeeper who answers, The Gardener could know more, but there is a bit I can answer. The simple version is that 120 years ago, we got Paired with another planet, and through that connection of planets

Wait a moment, can you explain what Pairing is?

Would you like to ask that as your first question instead?

Yes.

She nods and looks at the Butler, who adjusts his clothes and straightens up, The Pairing is an event brought about by the system. Were not sure how it happens, it could be random, maybe theres an entity overseeing it all, or perhaps it's some kind of natural process. During the Pairing, two planets are connected, and once the Pairing starts, it takes years for them to fully Pair. Sometimes it is just a few years; in other cases, it's decades or centuries. The speed of the Pairing is influenced by the natives of each planet.

He moves a plate away from him and wipes away an invisible speck of dust before fixing his sleeve.

Usually, each of the planets has a being called Absolute, and the Pairing speeds up when one of the Absolutes dies. There might be unlucky planets that get paired without an Absolute, but that's rare. So once theres only one Absolute remaining, there are usually no enemy forces capable of killing the other, and the planet that still has one tends to win if you want to call it that. The winning planet then grows stronger and bigger after absorbing the other planet.

I have dozens of questions, but he stops there, his expression knowing what is going through my head, This one is a free answer to show our goodwill, Mister Gwyn. You might lack information about our planet, but it went through a Pairing long ago; that's why we have information about it, and currently, the second Pairing is still in progress.

Chapter 299: Entering the Valley

I will ask the second question, the Housekeeper puts her elbows on the table and uses her hands to support her chin, You are powerful, but you don't seem to be from the generation from before the war. So, what are you, or where are you from?

I can't answer that question, I say simply.

Thanks for being honest, then another one. What are you doing in the Bastion?

Honestly, nothing too interesting. I intend to learn a bit more about what happened before the war and what led to all of this. I want to explore the Bastion, mostly out of curiosity. I currently have no intention of causing trouble or starting any fights here.

She gestures, and I ask, What happened to the world, other than pairing, with the Veil.

The Butler answers, The Gardener knows more, but from what little we know, the Enchanters Guild created the Veil to give us an advantage during the Pairing. Something got screwed up, and the Veil turned against us and the monsters.

His answer is simple, mirroring my own. I would like to ask them how old they are if they come from before the war. Why are they so sure that strong people must have lived through the war? More about the guild. Who is the Gardener? There are so many questions I want to ask, but theres a reason I only offered 3 questions, I am almost certain they wouldn't answer more so at least I got a three.

Unfortunately, even these answers are not enough to finish the side quest. I have only one question left. I can try to ask about the sleeping Calamity and the Valley; those interest me the most.

In the end, I ask, What do you know about the Valley?

The woman glances at the mustache man, and he answers once again, The Valley is the Valley, as the name says. It's a location shrouded in mist constantly, and the immense mana radiation prevents examination from afar. We've sent multiple expeditions, but they rarely return, and when they do, it's at a high price and the reports always mention a powerful monster that resides there. It could have been a clash between two Champions or perhaps the monster caused it when it took over. That or it's one of the bunkers they used to work on the Veil.

Well, I should have expected that answer. Everyone here seems to be satisfied with hiding in the city, they certainly don't seem too curious about their world.

The last question is, how old are you? the Housekeeper asks. She is smiling and examining me carefully. Just like with the previous questions, she gauges my reactions and seems capable of catching me in a lie, that I'm sure of.

It's a smart question and tricky besides, it will give her plenty of information about me.

Twenty-one, I answer, no, scratch that. Twenty-two, I correct myself. I entered the tutorial nearly a year ago, so I did celebrate my twenty-second birthday without even realizing it.

The silence that fills the room quickly becomes uncomfortable, and her eyes seem to be trying to drill holes in me.

Twenty-two, she whispers. He is not lying, the Housekeeper says, looking over at the Butler.

Both of them look at me. As they do, I notice Vega stealing snacks, thinking we are distracted. They see it too but pretend not to, and the Housekeeper even smiles gently at my silly disciple.

The questions are done, and the food is eaten, and the mood changes. It comes slowly, almost unnoticeably, but tension sneaks into the room, gradually building up until even Vega notices it. She doesn't even know why, but she moves closer to me, fear slipping into her gaze even as she tries to maintain a neutral expression.

So, what is the result of our conversation? Are we going to fight, or will you leave me to do my business?

The Butler doesn't react, but the Housekeeper smiles, sweeping a lock of her wavy black hair away from her face, her violet eyes giving me her full attention. I see her glance at the Voidsteel cutter at my waist. The woman either wants the weapon or wants to fight me.

What if we decided that you put the Bastion and its people at risk and that we should mitigate that risk? We've had some terrible experiences with travelers like you, The Housekeeper smiles at Vega. The mana that has lazily swirled around her body until now is being pulled towards her until I can't sense even a speck of mana radiating from her. Being used to power her body as she prepares to charge.

Even the Butler places a few anchor-like things all over the room and even far outside, most likely for his rift.

Well, if you decide to be hostile, I will fight back, obviously, I answer them.

My trait activates, a golden circle surrounding my pupils, and the energies I've been generating with the Thermokinetic heart swirl inside me. They threaten to escape, to explode and obliterate everyone and anything in their way.

The Butler says calmly, Housekeeper, calm down, please.

But she ignores him, her eyes wide open, muscles moving under her skin, So what if we use that little girl to pressure you? You seem to care

She cuts off and lifts her arm to her face. That forearm blocks the kinetic energy from the anchor I placed near her head. Instead of her head exploding, the forearm takes the attack, purple mana shining at the place of impact.

Heh, I guess my joke was too Her body is thrown to the side by an explosion emanating from another anchor I've placed nearby.

Purple mana shines around her body, and she's taken no damage at all.

Okay, okay, I get it another explosion, this time much stronger, throws her even further away, messing her clothes. Yet she doesn't fall and lands elegantly on her feet and stands up swiftly, Message received.

You kind of deserved that, the Butler sighs and then turns to me, She likes awkward jokes like that, so please forgive her, Mister Gwyn. We obviously will not harm your disciple without reason.

Come on, Butler, even given a reason, I wouldn't hurt such a cutie. Just look at her! The Housekeeper sits in her chair as if nothing happened and points at Vega, who keeps glancing between me and the woman.

I wonder if it's normal for all these people to be such weirdos. Is it the levels or old age that makes people like that, or is it the tutorial making these floors more spicy for all of us?

Well, I guess the dinner is over, so we will be leaving, I tell them, ready for anything.

I have noticed the barrier around this place, and that would give them an advantage in the event of a fight. Ive also noticed more guards nearby and one more person at a similar level to them. But I'm not worried.

My mana rumbles just under my skin, a Mana Reservoir long neglected. Thermal and kinetic energy roar inside two orbs I created and hid inside of my body before we entered the city. Even Vega can be evacuated through [Tether] to an anchor Ive placed in the city, given the barrier wont allow me to connect to the outside.

I might even want them to pick a fight, at least a little. I want to lower the effects of [Focus] and fight to forget about the Veil Guardian.

Just a little step, just a single attack aimed at Vega or me, and we can start.

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When it does not come, I'm almost disappointed. The Butler only nods and then stands up, hands behind his back, and leads me towards the exit. The Housekeeper stays behind, her eyes on my back the entire time as we leave.

Just before we get back to the normal streets, the Butler tells me, Mister Gwyn, next time, please refrain from such threatening actions. We prefer to act with civility and avoid violence, but we will not run from a challenge. Please count today as a show of our goodwill.

He bows and then, as slowly as ever, walks back to the Housekeeper.

Yup, before this floor ends, I will pay these guys one more visit. A very eventful visit where I will show them what I think of their show of goodwill.

Master?

Yes?

I think they might be even bigger assholes than you.

Kids, they grow up so fast. Anyway, that's why I usually let others deal with people.

Why do you think that, Vega? As I ask her, she smiles so widely that her eyes create a thin line. Oh my, does she like being called Vega so much?

The woman was nicer, but the man I don't like him. I don't know why.

Walking through nearly empty streets, I slow my steps to her level, It's because she hid her feelings less, meanwhile the man kept restraining himself. It's usually better to know what you're against, even if it's something bad, meanwhile, you can't be sure with people like Mr. Moustache.

I see! Is master going to beat them up later?

Yes, but first we need to leave the Bastion and head to the Valley. They keep watching us, and even the barrier around the city is changing so maybe they want to trap us here. Remember, no matter how nice people act they could be a step away from stabbing you in the back. So, we will leave for a while and come back later.

The barrier surrounding the fallen bastion makes me nervous. Even with my eyes and [Resonance], I'm not sure if I could do anything about it while taking care of Vega.

So we spend a few hours moving between shops. Even given the late hour, plenty of them are still open.

As we pass through more and more of them, I start to realize one thing. The items there aren't very rare, no matter how high-end the shop or blacksmith we visit. Some of them even refuse to deal with us when they notice that we're not citizens as they say and only have a 3-day entrance token.

The control the leadership here has over its facilities is impressive. Blacksmiths, clothes shops, food shops, a small guild for explorers, expedition planners, and more. Everything is deeply controlled, and we need to be authorized to use their services to the fullest.

Looking back at the Bastion far behind us, I finish off the last of the monsters that had surrounded us.

[You have defeated Poiseater- lvl 123]

[Lvl 218 > Lvl 219]

I watch as Vega deals with one of a much lower level. She saw me dealing with stronger ones, so she knows what sort of attacks to expect and dodges them.

The daring half-demon even allows a few physical strikes to land to test her class skill. A bit of that kinetic energy gets repelled by the barrier the skill affords her, and another part gets stored in her Kinetic storage.

It's still way too early for her to use her heart with her skills, but she will get there.

Name:Nathaniel Gwyn

Difficulty:Hell

Floor: 5 - Mentorship

Time left until forced return: 4y 27d 16h 2m 6s

Traits (2/3):

I check the timer, and I have a week left with Vega and 27 days until the tournament. That's it if there isn't something else. The time limit feels way too short for anyone who cant fly or who isnt as strong as me. Perhaps the floor will continue even after the disciple returns to their word.

It's hard to describe, but even though Ive decided to put more emphasis on my growth, I enjoy the time Ive spent with my disciple. I keep putting off the test to see if she is just a fake or from the real world. I will do it just before the end of the quest.

But now, let's check the Valley.

Vega, come here, I gesture, and she quickly comes rushing after killing the monster.

I pull one of the most valuable mana stones I have out of my pocket and hand it to her, This is a failsafe and will protect you in the event we get separated.

Her eyes expand, and she takes it and quickly starts examining it.

Like me, indeed.

The mana stone I gave her contains one of the most complex inscriptions I've made so far. Unlike my botched attempts at whatever I was doing in the Sanctuary, I've improved my inscriptions quite a bit. The stone is upper rare and just a tiny step away from an epic item.

Its function is simple. It will protect her against high levels of ambient mana so it doesn't fry her brain. Of course, I will keep her near me and constantly protect her myself, but this is just in case.

I have spent plenty of time working on it and learned a lot. It works by attracting mana to it like a vortex and then pushing it away - like when the black mana dominates the surrounding mana.

After a few tests, I can consider it a success, and the quality of the stone helps a lot.

Thank you, master, I will make sure to protect it!

Sure, sure, I tell her, as she lifts her arms, and as many times before, I lift her to my chest.

I shift the bags on my back and create a barrier around us that is ready to activate at full power anytime.

Part of my mana goes into [Resonance], and I start heading towards the Valley. Moving through the air, we quickly close the distance, and with every mile, the mana filling the air grows heavier.

Up in the air, I can see the entire Valley stretched out before me, covered in mist and mana so dense that one could almost see it with normal eyes. Surrounded by tall mountains and hills, it almost looks like they were placed to block anything there from getting out.

I notice that Vega has trouble breathing and compress my mana a bit more and radiate more of it to power my skills. Her breathing turns to normal, and I fly closer.

The Valley, even as far as it is, is eerily quiet, nestled down there.

Flying becomes more difficult, as the surrounding mana disrupts my concentration. Logically it shouldn't affect me or my kinetic energy at all, yet it does, and I'm forced to land.

I almost make a mistake and activate my trait, and only stop myself at the last second, realizing how big a mistake it could be. The trait allows me to see mana waves and collect more information on anything mana-based. Just the sheer amount of mana and information here would likely tear my brain apart.

Instead, I strengthen the barrier around us.

Each step is harder than the one before, and it takes a while for us to reach the entrance to the valley. The wall of mist seems to separate everything inside from the outer world. That's what it is, it looks like a literal smooth wall.

Just a few steps and we will be inside.

I check the amount of kinetic and thermal energy I've collected. I examine my full Mana Reservoir. I test my skills, and all of them are working. The voidsteel slicer is still at my waist. Even the mana stones I've inscribed and prepared for just in case are in my pockets, ready to be used. There are circuits drawn with mana conductive paint on my arms and legs and even some lower quality lines on my chest.

As ready as I can be, I take a step with Vega in my arms.

The moment we pass through the wall of mist, the view ahead clears. The Valley is much bigger than it seemed from outside, though it's still surrounded by mist and mountains that seem to scrape the sky.

In front of us is, as far as I can see, a forest, some hills, and a few lakes, and there, far in the distance, a being sleeps. A being much bigger than anything I've seen up till now. It has a snake-like body, long and slim, covered in beautiful light green scales. The monster has six legs too, each of them slim and nimble-looking.

The head lays on the ground, eyes closed, and each breath shakes the trees below. Were it to rear up, the monster would be as tall as a skyscraper.

[Gaiathra - lvl ???]

I guess I don't have to look for the sleeping Calamity anymore.

Chapter 300: I like it here

Even though the monsters sleeping so far away, I cover Vega's mouth with my hand. It's irrational and straight-up silly. There is no way the monster could be woken up so easily. It's just that there is still that little what if?

This six-legged serpentine napping noodle has three question marks. That means that it's probably over level 300, and I'm pretty sure it's closer to 400 just based on its appearance. So, the warning from the system makes much more sense now.

I ignore Vega's shock and carry her into the forest. The napping noodle is what? Two or three dozen miles away? The space within the Valley is bigger than it appears from the outside, so exploring it will probably be fine.

According to the information Nina gave me, there should be a Mirror and a few bunkers that would have been used by people in high positions. So it's my goal to find information about the Veil and finish the quest.

And then, I want to find the Mirror, it's supposed to be some kind of powerful artifact. I hope it's a higher rarity than epic. Someone from easy difficulty would probably want to choke me to death if they heard me say it. Those poor guys are extremely happy when they see low rare items.

Master, maybe

I interrupt my silly disciple, It's fine. It's taking a nap.

N-nap Vega gulps.

The pressure within the Valley is even stronger than outside, and I finally identify the source of that mana. It's Gaiathra sleeping over there and something else near the monster. The monster isn't using any kind of skill, no barrier, nothing of the sort. It's just the sleeping monster's mana seeping out of its body.

I won't even try to lie, I'm jealous. Just how many thousands or tens of thousands of points in mana is that?

Gradually, I also realize something.

My goal is to become stronger than that monster, and with the way I go about it when I get to its level, I will have much more mana. Damn, can I even pack so much of it inside of my tiny body? And damn, how cool it would be to stand against such a giant and be able to release multiple times more mana while facing it.

I push us higher into the air and land on one of the thicker branches with a view of the sleeping Gaiathra. Is it at the rank of Champion? My theory always was that a Champion is either at three question marks, or greater, probably.

For example, Tristan and Keiron, the Champions from the second floor, were capable of destroying multiple continents and killing millions, tens of millions of people in a matter of hours.

The monster in front of us feels strong, terrifyingly strong, yet I hesitate to think of it as a Champion. Maybe I have to change my thinking a bit; maybe Champions are all over level 450.

That also creates a question. Just how fucking strong was Lissandra? I mean, sure, she devoured the mana of an entire planet and destroyed it all with a single skill. It's just that I keep forgetting that. Then there was the Saint Absolute from the third floor, and she must have been at a similar level.

Master, you were dozing off for a second, Vega pulls on my clothes.

Did I? But I'm still watching our surroundings, so don't worry.

Me too! Were you thinking about something interesting?

Yes. I like to sort things in my mind once in a while. But anyway, are you having any trouble with the pressure?

She shakes her head, Master's barrier blocks it all. I just have to stay close and continue training [Mana Manipulation], [Concentration], and try to learn Mana Cycling!

I wonder if the others have such hard-working disciples.

Sensing an attack, I take a step and drop from the tree which crumbles in its entirety and gets pushed to the ground as if stepped on by an invisible giant. Another similar attack begins to form over me, but I move quickly.

Hold on, there are more of them, I tell Vega.

I continue to run between the trees as they explode behind us, each attack leaving deep craters in the ground. Even after dodging a dozen of them I still can't reach the attacker, the air in front of me shivers. A big maw full of teeth appears from thin air to snap at Vega.

Before it can reach her, I shoot a cone of kinetic energy at it, and the monster goes flying through the forest, breaking through trees. Then I send a dozen mana projectiles I create shoot towards where it flew, piercing trees and sending chunks of earth flying as they strike. Yet no notification comes.

A barrier forms behind my back and deflects a rain of stones flying towards us, some of them are bigger than my body. They explode and grind against the barrier which ripples in response, sending dust and rubble into the air.

I create a javelin, quickly making it denser, before boosting it with kinetic energy and launching it in the direction of the stone volley.

[You have defeated Terraclaw - lvl 191]

I avoid another attack just before it crushes the place where I stood with invisible force and finally manage to reach the monster that's been spamming them.

[Giant Troll - lvl 199]

The monster is easily five times my height. An old friend from the 1st floor.

A dozen javelins form around me and float in the air as I infuse each of them with thermal energy. The pale blue mana begins to shine with the brilliant golden luster of thermal energy. Five of the javelins shoot after the troll as he activates the marks on its skin, and they start glowing, preparing to defend.

The sixth one takes off behind me, piercing through the head of the monster with a big maw full of teeth that attacked me before.

[You have defeated Phantom Lindworm - lvl 204]

I examine its dead body for a short moment. It looks like a big snake with two legs and the scales have a similar green color to the giant one sleeping far ahead. Then I detonate the body with more kinetic energy, blasting it to pieces.

Turning back to the Giant Troll, I watch as five javelins crash against its skin, the flames concentrated into a small point at the tip of the javelins. Each of them pierces the monster, the flames bursting through the other side, drawing a loud roar out of it as the gravity field increases.

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The trees in a bigger and bigger area tilt and break, crashing to the ground with the bulk of the pressure directed at me.

Before the attack can reach me, I use an anchor I placed on one of the javelins impaling the monster and sending even more thermal energy through.

Flames envelop the monster, and it starts thrashing around as it rapidly burns alive and crashes down. Pieces of its limbs charring and falling apart as it does so.

Without even a moment to look around, I feel the presence of a hundred or more monsters. A big flock of eyeballs as big as a volleyball with two wings each. They locate us quickly, immediately pressing in on us with various attacks.

Mental attacks which I block for both of us. Disrupting attacks that fail against my barrier and laser-like projectiles shooting from the middle of the eyeballs. Each of these melts and burns anything it touches to dust.

Tying an anchor to one of my projectiles, I shoot it towards the monsters, and then I send an attack through as I fend off their attempts to disrupt it.

A shockwave erupts in the middle of the flying group of monsters, a hundred or so monsters cooperate to push against the burst of kinetic energy. They disrupt, they create a barrier, and together they resist.

How curious.

I send a stronger wave, and they do it again, though they struggle more this time and have to stop attacking. Their panic is most noticeable in the movements of their small wings.

Before I can send a tricolored bomb through, a quick movement flashes at the corner of my vision, and an owl as big as a car passes through. Two of the flying eyeballs in its beak and a few more in its talons.

The group of flying monsters quickly changes their direction, running away, and I watch the owl leave with its prey.

[Dread Owl - lvl ??]

The white owl is extremely quiet as it flies, and there is no mana I could sense from it.

Well, it looks like the sleepy danger noodle isn't the only dangerous monster here. We should be careful of the owl as well.

Before I can even finish the thought, a snake emerges from the forest and strikes like lightning, its fangs burrowing into the owl mid-flight.

The white owl screeches, flapping its wings to no avail. The snake pulls the flying raptor into the forest, and after a second, the screeches stop with a wet cracking noise.

I think I like it here.

Just an hour later, Vega and I are standing on a branch in a big tree, looking down on hundreds of bison, each the size of a bus, amble towards a lake, sipping on water as the largest keeps watch. The chonky boy is a few levels higher than me, but even that wont help.

A long maw with sharp teeth snaps up from under the water, and a scaly body flashes into view as a crocodile pulls one of the Bison under the water.

Blood flows to the surface, and the bubbles of air slowly disappear.

Even the leader of the bison doesn't seem to care, almost as if it had been expected.

A javelin over my shoulder reaches the breaking point, tricolored mana turning bright white, and I launch it at the herd.

The leader bobs, and a few of them separate, layering barriers in front of them, even adding some stones into it. Another group even moves some of the lake's water, a compressed burst of it meeting with my barrier.

That's when the javelin pierces through multiple barriers and then explodes.

The resulting heatwave sets the nearby vegetation ablaze, and vaporizes a large quantity of water, even causing the lake to boil.

The following shockwave throws a dozen or so Bisons into the air, some even fly towards the lake at which point the crocodile snatches them, tearing chunks out of the ground and pulling up trees in the process.

[You have defeated Guardian Bison - lvl 178]

[You have defeated Guardian Bison - lvl 148]

[You have defeated Guardian Bison - lvl 171]

[You have defeated Guardian Bison - lvl 139]

[Lvl 219 > Lvl 220]

I notice Vega shooting a tiny mana orb boosted by her kinetic energy. Seeing the chaos going there, it's almost cute observing her attack.

Then the implosion of my attack resolves. Air rushing back to the center of the javelins explosion, pulling the monsters, debris, and water toward it, and compressing it all into a tight sphere.

Bones break, monsters scream, notifications sound.

Using the opportunity, the croc gets out of the water, a big muscular body covered in scales, mana covering its skin in a barrier as it starts fighting against the head Bison. They seem to be just fine after my attack and are clearly more physically oriented.

Well, another attack it is.

Five javelins form above my head, and I push more mana into them. Compressing it, squeezing it to make them as deadly as possible.

Even while dealing with extreme mana density here and defending me and Vega, I can do it. My reservoir is still untouched, and even though I'm taking a big chunk of my mana, I know it will regenerate quickly.

When the javelins start turning bright white, both of the monsters down there stop fighting, and turn to me. The Bison seems especially hateful for some unknown reason.

The croc, surprisingly quick on the uptake, starts heading back towards the lake, and the Bison charges at me.

But I boost all of the javelins with kinetic energy, and they disappear, hitting the monsters and the ground around them.

Strengthening our barrier, Even I opt to fly in the opposite direction, and even then, I get caught in the shockwave and heatwave, parts of the forest catch flame and trees get pulled from their roots.

[You have defeated Two-Headed Snake - lvl 150]

[You have defeated Guardian Bison - lvl 171]

[You have defeated Phantom Lindworm - lvl 191]

[You have defeated Phantom Lindworm - lvl 161]

...

Plenty of other monsters die in the aftereffect, but there are two notifications I'm waiting for.

[You have defeated Guardian Bison - lvl 235]

[You have defeated Goliath Crocodile - lvl 229]

There are no level-ups, but thats fine. I feel as if the stress thats been collecting inside me for quite some time has started to dissipate. I feel as if it's easier to breathe now. It's not perfect, I still have Vega to protect so I can't let go and lower my [Focus], but even this is an improvement.

Just a nice step towards a happier Nat.

It's not like I don't like training or playing with inscriptions and items, but it's been too long since I got to enjoy such a nice hunting ground, and I plan to use it as much as possible with the time remaining before Vega gets sent back.

What? I ask Vega, who is looking at me with her big red eyes.

I also want to learn how to do that.

Oh? Does she like my tricolored bombs? She is still far from ready, and I think a more reasonable person wouldn't even consider teaching such a young kid something like that. But I'm not reasonable, and neither is my disciple.

Don't worry, I have a few ideas about how you might be able to do something similar with the help of your heart, I've been thinking about it for a while.

Her eyes become even bigger, and I can hear her heart beat faster. She is MY disciple, isn't she? Nathaniel Gwyn's first disciple, the half-demon Vega.

Before this ends, we will come up with a few rather destructive uses for mana and kinetic energy.