

## 52. Happy Memories

In disbelief and horror, Leon slipped and fell to the floor as the cavern plunged into darkness. The ground was damp with drool, and protruding rocks painfully grazed his back. Deprived of his sight, Leon focused his hearing on the hissing and scuttling of movement from the hundreds of spiders above him.

Damiens calm voice echoed through the void, "Night Crawlers a giant subspecies of spiders, D grade threat on their own but can increase to a B grade with enough numbers. They are not poisonous but prefer to use basic earth magic and their powerful limbs to impale enemies." Leon could hear Damiens cane clinking on stone as he moved around.

Damien looked at Leon's terrified expression and was grateful for his night vision. Thar and Varn also had night vision, although vastly inferior to his. Thar was calm while observing the surroundings, but Varn was practically shivering in fear under the watchful gaze of hundreds of monsters.

Damien then checked on Fay. Blood red pupils replaced her usual icy blue eyes. She casually glanced around but seemed unbothered by the spiders' gaze. Damien grinned.

*'Although she isn't a Vampire, she is slowly adapting to our point of view. These spiders are nothing but mere pets to a Vampire, something to be controlled and ordered around. Maybe I should enslave these spiders somehow?'*

Glancing up, Damien used telepathy to determine the spiders' level of intellect or possible command structure. Unfortunately, he was thoroughly disappointed. They were operating on pure instincts. There was no evidence of communication between the spiders as their surface thoughts were hollow other than **Fear** and **Hunger**.

Damien and the spiders engaged in a staring contest, but it was clear who was the superior as the Night Crawlers would shy away from him and attempt to scuttle into the darkest corners. Damien

could understand through telepathy their *bloodlust* and desire to devour his followers, yet they didn't dare to engage in combat due to Damien's presence.

*'So these spiders do have the potential for some level of intelligence considering they can discern that I am a threat. Perhaps the mana density is relatively low in this dungeon, hence the Night Crawlers' lack of communication abilities. Obviously, I don't expect them to speak, but there should be some form of a colony, hierarchy or hive mind, yet there is none. If only I had some kind of monster taming ability...'*

Damien reached out again with telepathy and targeted the nearest spider, he attempted to command it, but the spider just shirked back in pain and fell from the ceiling with a cry. The sudden noise of a spider falling scared the daylights out of Leon, and Damien found it rather amusing watching the man squirm about in the dark.

The spiders felt threatened and began hissing as they closed in on his position. Hundreds of meter-long spiders scuttled across the ceiling in an eerily uniformed fashion, like soldiers marching to war.

"So discussions of servitude are off the table, I assume?" Damien said in a mocking tone, "It's hard to negotiate with brutes. It appears a good culling is in order."

With a tap of his cane, Damien ascended into the air towards the hundreds of creatures that dared defy his rule. Drool from a spiders maw's was automatically deflected by his [Germaphobe] traits skill *Deflection*. Watching the saliva impact an invisible wall and slide down to the cavern floor below was a rather odd sight, yet Damien focused his attention back on his pathetic opponents.

Damien channelled his mana, and a small crack in space appeared. From within his *Spatial Inventory*, his signature and favourite weapons emerged. His hundred runic engraved cards shot out from the crack in space and swirled around him like a whirlwind of death.

Wishing to avoid these filthy creatures, Damien expanded his *Perception Field*. Just like before, his view warped, and his levitation skill almost faltered as his worldview became unfocused and peculiar once again. Damien quickly reigned in his Perception Field to only cover around ten meters around him.

Although Damien felt no treat or even disgust for the Night Crawlers, having a complete view of their forms from every angle was quite horrifying even for him. So he quickly commanded his swarm of metal with *Psychokinesis* to hunt.

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Leon curled up in a ball on the cold cavern floor. He felt a stabbing pain all over his body but ignored it. Within the infinite darkness, the cries of death reverberated through the cavern. Inhumane hissing and screeches were *silenced* by the whistling of the wind as metal cards swirled around the room like a swarm of homing insects, out for prey.

Bodies fell like hail as blood splashed and soaked through Leon's attire. He was cold, miserable and scared. Leon was confident without a doubt in his mind that this was the worst day of his life. Even more dreadful than that fateful night, when he was kicked from his home by his Father's first wife, proclaimed to be a bastard and went from living like a king to a street rat overnight.

He despised Duke Nightshade. His years of suffering had finally paid off, and his plan that had been in motion for years was finally complete. He had endured falling from grace to becoming a mere commoner, all for him to rise back up to get revenge on his Father. Yet his plans had fallen through at the last stage due to Duke Nightshades' intervention.

Although he gained his position through somewhat questionable means, he still worked hard, and to have everything taken away from him yet again by another felt wrong. Why do those in power seem to orchestrate his fate? Is the world this cruel to everyone or only himself?

He began to cry. His salty tears attempted to wash away his sorrows and blood stained cheeks. He felt his consciousness drift as he left that damp and dark place filled with monster guts and death.

He reopened his eyes and found himself in a distant memory of the past, a happy one. His tenth birthday had been a joyous occasion as the Baron officially recognised his Mother as a concubine, much to the first wife's frustrations.

His Mother, a short woman with brown hair and freckles wearing a maid outfit, had run to his room with a cheerful smile to break the good news. Leon listened, "Dwight, my little boy is all grown up now, look at you! So handsome! I have good news to share, the Baron has accepted me as his concubine! Our lives will improve from now on, and the other children will no longer bully you!" Leon's heart felt light and fluffy hearing his Mother call him by his old name. Leon had abandoned the name 'Dwight Lewis' as he didn't wish to be associated with the family that murdered his Mother and discarded him in disgust. Instead, he began his new life as Leon O'Neill, Mayor of Blackthorn and part-time slave trader.

*Wake up*

Leon heard a voice that sounded distant but slowly got louder and louder.

*Wake up Leon*

***Wake up Leon***

Leon's eyes slowly opened. The smell of death and bloodshed tickled his nose, and his head pounded like a drum with a terrible headache. His limbs felt numb and drained of strength.

Leon then heard Damiens mocking tone through the dark, "To think a plant almost ate you."

"A plant?" Leon said in a parched voice.

Fay used her F rank *Pyrokinesis* to relight the torch, the light was harsh, and Leon tried to move his arm to block the light but found he couldn't. He felt resistance and pain as he tried to move as if spiked chains were digging into his skin and tying him down.

Once his eyes adjusted, Leon saw his body wrapped in black vines that moved around his body like snakes. All around him, spider corpses were being devoured by hundreds of vines as well, yet oddly the vines actively avoided Damien like the plague.

"The black vines usually consume dead bodies, but they can also sedate prey with hallucinations and slowly drain them until they inevitably perish from dehydration. So how was the high? A good experience?" Damien said with an amused expression that a person would give a child.

"Ah!" Leon screamed in surprise, "Get it off, Get it off, Get it off!" Seeing the vines tighten around his body and pumping away his blood, he began to panic, but the more he struggled, the tighter the vines became. Finally, he felt his body being squeezed to death as his bones groaned in protest.

Damien poked Leon's body with his cane and said in a condescending tone, "Leon, I hope this experience will humble you. Dying to a plant is a rather pathetic way to perish, don't you think?"

Leon cursed Damien as his consciousness slowly drifted away, and he returned to his happy memories from a long distant past.