

Chapter -91

The can-strewn floor of ‘*Huge Cans*’ lit up with three pink triangles, followed by a pillar of the same light that pierced through the ceiling.

“Uuuh! I can’t wait!” Bee said excitedly.

“Don’t look right at it,” I told her.

“But I didn’t get to see it properly last time...” she replied sadly.

“It’ll fry your brain,” Panda said.

“It’s just a sacrifice I’ll have to make to satisfy my curiosity.”

I laughed. “When you put it that way, how could I deny you?”

“Pretty sure your new Immortality’s Curse is only screwing her up more than she already was...”

Bee pointed her tongue at him defiantly.

A second later the Adjudicator manifested above the floor. Several of the cans on the floor were pressed into flat discs just by sheer proximity to the extra-dimensional entity.

WE MEET AGAIN, PLAYER.

I SEE YOU SURVIVED YOUR ENCOUNTER WITH THE ANNOUNCER.

CURIOUS THAT THE WAYWARD MINOR HAS CONTINUED TO EVADE CAPTURE.

THE QUEEN MUST BE QUITE UPSET ABOUT THAT.

Bee’s black eyes lit up as she took in the visage of the Adjudicator. It was, as the other two times I’d seen it, an upside-down pyramid covered in quivering purple skin, which was dotted with eyes and sprouted tentacles here-and-there. Above the flat top of the pyramid was a sphere with a mouth that held an eye within.

“Is there only one of you guys in the US, or are we just unlucky getting you three times in a row?” Panda asked the Adjudicator.

I AM THE ONE IN CHARGE OF OVERSEEING THIS REGION.

ADDITIONALLY, I HAVE BEEN ASSIGNED TO JUDGE PLAYER ‘GAMBIT’.

“That makes sense,” he replied.

**IT IS CURIOUS THAT I HAVE NOT BEEN CALLED IN TO DEAL WITH THE
POTENTIAL CONFLICT OF INTEREST FROM YOU ACCOMPANYING PLAYER
‘GAMBIT’.**

“No one has complained yet, so is it really an issue?”

**MOST CANNOT PERCEIVE YOU, THANKS TO THE VERY NATURE OF YOUR
BEING.
IF THE AGENCIES KNEW YOU WERE GUIDING THIS PLAYER, THEY WOULD
DOUBTLESSLY OBJECT TO IT.**

“He makes a good point,” I replied.

**I WAS CALLED IN TO JUDGE WHETHER PLAYER ‘GAMBIT’ HAS BEEN
COLLUDING WITH AN AGENCY INSIDER TO LOCATE THE GOLDEN SEA URCHIN.
THE QUESTION OF HIS ABILITY TO NAVIGATE COLORED PATHS HAS ALSO
BEEN CALLED INTO QUESTION, ALONGSIDE CERTAIN OBSCURE
ACHIEVEMENTS THAT AWARDED POWERFUL ITEMS.**

WHAT IS YOUR DEFENCE AGAINST THESE ACCUSATIONS?

“We just got lucky,” I replied. “Panda didn’t guide me to find the Sea Urchin, and most of the time he is actively trying to prevent me from doing the things that give me those ‘obscure’ achievements.”

Panda nodded. “As for the Colored Paths, it’s all thanks to advanced guesswork. Also, you might be the insane one, if you believe I can control the actions of Gambit.”

**I SEE. THERE IS TRUTH IN THESE WORDS.
I HAVE REVIEWED ALL PAST FOOTAGE AND IT DOES INDEED SEEM LIKE
HAPPENSTANCE.**

**NOW, THERE IS ALSO THE MATTER OF YOUR NEW LEGENDARY ABILITY.
SEVERAL LIMITS HAVE BEEN APPLIED TO PREVENT IT FROM DESTROYING
YOUR REGION.**

“Wait, it was capable of that by default?”

**ON THE LIST OF ENVIRONMENTAL EFFECTS WERE THINGS SUCH AS
‘BOUNDARY BREAK’, ‘CATACLYSM’, ‘SOUL-EXPLODING VIRUS’, AND SEVERAL
MORE THAT WOULD HAVE RENDERED YOUR REGION A BARREN WASTELAND
MUCH SOONER THAN ANTICIPATED.**

“Damn, a shame to see all that go,” I muttered with a frown.

IT WOULD HAVE KILLED YOU AND YOUR FRIEND.

“Nah, we’d have survived that,” I replied, certain.

Bee nodded. “We’re not that weak that a little cataclysm could kill us!”

**YOUR HUBRIS IS ADMIRABLE.
PERHAPS THIS IS WHAT HAS SET YOU APART FROM OTHER PLAYERS IN YOUR
REGION THUS FAR.**

“So, is that it? You just popped in to say all that and now you’re leaving again?” Panda asked.

**GIVEN THE EVENTS THAT AWAIT YOU AND THE AGENCIES CEASELESS
HOUDING OF THE TWO OF YOU, A BIT OF LENIENCY ONLY SEEMS FAIR.**

**I DO NOT SERVE THE AGENCIES.
I SERVE THE SYSTEM AND ITS CREATOR.
I ONLY EXIST TO UPHOLD FAIRNESS.**

GIVEN THAT THE SYSTEM HAS ALLOWED YOU TO REACH THIS POINT IN TIME WITHOUT YOU USING ANY OUTSIDE MEANS TO CHEAT, THERE IS NO REASON FOR ME TO BELIEVE YOUR EXISTENCE IS UNFAIR.

WHILE I HOPE NOT TO MEET YOU AGAIN, I AM SURE I WILL BE APPOINTED TO JUDGE YOU SOON ENOUGH.

“See you later,” I told it, as the pink pillar of light appeared to whisk the Adjudicator away.

“Bye-bye, Adjudicator!” Bee said with a wave.

As it disappeared from sight, the cans it had flattened into discs were rewound in time to their original forms.

“He was nice,” she said.

“I’ve got a headache,” I told her.

“Me too! It feels like I stared at the sun for too long again.”

“You two are morons.”

I ignored him and said, “Since this place seems safe enough, I should do my Class Evolution here.”

“Might as well,” Panda said. “I was starting to think you’d never do it, truth be told.”

“Change is scary,” Bee said, understanding my conundrum. After all, I was quite happy with my current skills and the way the Plugins functioned. Well, mostly happy.

Before I brought out my Evolution menu, I inspected the new ring I’d received.

‘Sea Urchin Ring’	x
<i>Awarded for finding a Golden Sea Urchin and eating it. This ring is made from the yellow-orange mushy innards of sea urchin and holds a fragment of its great powers.</i>	
<i>By clenching the hand wearing this ring into a fist, the whole arm becomes covered in the shell of a poisonous sea urchin. The following punch will inflict twice the normal impact damage and pierces most forms of armor.</i>	

<i>Cooldown: 15 minutes</i>
Weight: 0.35 Pandas

I immediately slid the mushy ring over the ring-finger of Brock’s gauntlet.

“*Waaah!! I do, Gamby!! You and me forever!!*”

“Ah shit, wrong finger,” I muttered.

I squeezed my hand into a fist and suddenly a black shell full of three-inch-long spikes grew around my clenched gauntlet and up my forearm and upper arm, stopping just short of the shoulder joint. None of the spikes seemed to hurt me, as I moved the arm about, even though it seemed like they definitely should.

When I swung my fist as a test, aiming for an upright shelf of cans, a sound like a shotgun-crossbow hybrid filled the room and dozens of black spikes had pierced through the aluminum containers and gotten embedded in the metal shelf behind them.

The black shell quickly broke apart and fell off my fist and arm in small chunks that hit the ground and turned to black sand on impact.

“Huh, it seems to trigger off of Brock’s Air Blast.”

“Maybe you can combine it with your pump-up skill and get eight times the impact damage?” Panda speculated.

“...and then if I combine it with my Soul Blade, it should be thirty-two times the damage!”

“That sounds really powerful,” Bee said. “But that’s only if the effects are multiplicative and not additive.”

“If there’s anything I’ve learnt from the Great Game, it’s that effects are always multiplicative,” I replied. “It’s like the System was made to be broken with obscene damage numbers.”

I unflexed my gauntleted fist. “Anyway, I’m gonna pick my Evolution now. Would you mind watching the door for enemies?”

“Okay! But share the tooltips with me.”

“I will,” I promised.

While Bee moved over towards the entrance, sitting herself atop an upright shelf with her hands ready to shoot anything that entered, I went towards the back of the store, wading through the sea of cans.

“You know, the name is misleading,” I muttered.

“What?” Panda asked. He was back to sitting on my shoulder again.

“None of these cans are huge...”

He groaned.

I pulled up my Evolution screen, skimming the text that was identical to the first one I’d received.

Congratulations! You have reached a Class milestone! x	
Pick an option!	
<i>You have reached the second Class milestone by reaching Level [¿ERROR?].</i>	
<i>You now have the choice between switching to a higher-quality Class or evolving your current one. An Evolved Class will follow the theme of your current Class, while a Class Change will be something new.</i>	
<i>Warning: changing Class will change your current Class abilities.</i>	
<i>Change Class</i>	<i>Evolve Class</i>

Without even pausing for consideration, I pressed ‘Evolve Class’.

You have chosen ‘ <i>Evolve Class</i> ’		
Select an Evolution from the options		
Game.equalizer() <i>Equality is law.</i>	Game.randomizer() <i>Embrace chaos.</i>	Game.changer() <i>I make the rules!</i>
Main Attribute: Vitality & Dexterity	Main Attribute: Insanity Gauge	Main Attribute: Strength
Ultimate Ability: ‘Game.levelEqualize()’	Ultimate Ability: ‘Game.randomizeAll()’	Ultimate Ability: ‘Game.newRule()’

Equalize all Players to the average Level across the entire Game.	Randomizes all Enemies and Dungeons, as well as shuffling the terrain.	Set a new Game rule or alter an existing one (limits apply).
Charge: 1/1	Charge: 1/1	Charge: 1/1

“Holy shit, why would they give you *this kind* of power!?” Panda said, utterly baffled.

“I wanna see!” Bee yelled from the front of the store. Even though there were twenty-five feet separating us, I was somehow able to still share the screen with a mental nudge.

“Oooh!” she said. “You should pick Randomize!”

“If I do that, I might as well wave my revenge goodbye. No way that it wouldn’t also shuffle the Mayor, his house, and everything else.”

“Boo!” she replied.

It was interesting that the Randomizer Evolution used my Insanity Gauge, but right now my goal was set, and I couldn’t pick it without giving up chasing down the Mayor and getting rid of him once and for all.

“Definitely pick the New Rule one,” Panda urged. “That’s too much power to leave behind.”

“Reading my mind,” I told him and clicked that option.

Class Choice Confirmation Required
<i>This choice is final!</i>
<i>You will not be able to change your Class again until level 30!</i>
<i>Are you certain you wish to proceed?</i>
YES ——— NO

No sooner had I clicked ‘Yes’, than a sense of déjà vu hit me.

WARNING!
A GREAT GAME ADJUDICATOR HAS BEEN SUMMONED!
CEASE HOSTILITIES OR BE VAPORISED!

—Patreon-exclusive Copy—
—Kristoffer Pauly (aka “Dosei”)—

VACATE THE LANDING ZONE IMMEDIATELY!

“Bet that guy is tired of us by now.”