

# Chapter 21: A big boon

Ethan pressed himself behind a tree and took a brief peek at the distance. Four bears with gray steel-like fur circled a goblin, who held a stick with a scared stiff expression.

*"Master, the stealth won't work on them..."*

Ethan decided to use Scan on them.

## ***Dream Bear***

*Level 9*

*Known as the Master of Illusions, these Spirit Beasts possess Illusion Aspect from birth.*

### ***Skills:***

*Illusionary Spirit (Rank 1)*

*Type: Active*

*Rank: Rare*

*Creates illusionary figures with Willpower. This skill doesn't work on Iron-rankers and above.*

## ***Gryven***

*Level 11 (Iron)*

*This individual cannot be analyzed with your current skill rank.*

*Gryven, an iron ranker...*

The goblin he almost attacked in the cave was ten levels above him. No wonder Gryven remained calm when he tried to attack.

The bears suddenly roared and slashed their giant claws. Gryven stepped back, passing through a bear, and touched the ground. The earth swelled and a pillar leaped up, flinging a bear in the air. The three other bears distorted and vanished while the last one crashed and created a small crater.

Ethan's teeth gritted as he watched Gryven laughing and trampling the bear. His hands itched, compelling him to smash the goblin's head in the tree and beat him to death.

His eyes shrank at the realization.

*Am I craving revenge?*

He sucked in a long breath and analyzed the violence that wasn't there before.

"Master, do you—"

"I want to kill that guy," he declared in a low voice.

A level 11 goblin like Gryven could either be a mage or a physical fighter. A sneak attack with all of them here couldn't possibly fail.

"Alyssia, boost my speed as much as you can."

"Master, you will be hurt too..."

"I can deal with injuries with the fruits... this is the best chance to get a free kill on an Iron-ranker."

"Master... if only I was at my peak, I could have sent a thousand like him to Lord Brilliant."

"How strong were you exactly?"

"Level 145, a diamond-ranker."

"Holy... let's talk later."

Ethan and the gang crept near the tree directly behind Gryven. He gripped the dagger in his right hand as they required less time to swing.

*Sorry bear, you will have to bear the impact with its body...*

This high risk, high reward stunt raised his heartbeat.

He bent his body and shot forward as though he was an arrow fired from a bow. In another second, he was already before the goblin, his dagger unconsciously thrust forward. Releasing the dagger, Ethan raised his knees before both of them struck the bear, who whimpered again.

*It doesn't hurt as much as I thought.*

Gryven's hands moved. Ethan bounced back to his feet and trained the crossbow on the goblin.

"Argh, who is it?" Gryven grasped the dagger stuck in the back of its neck and looked up. His eyes fell on Ethan and his mouth split open, revealing a battered tongue.

*He got tortured for letting me escape?*

Ethan smiled. Alyssia and Lulu with her gang stood beside him, glaring at Gryven. Ethan felt like they would destroy the goblin if he just said "Yes."

"Why fight here alone when you acted so high and mighty with your goons?"

Gryven's face twisted as it slapped the ground. The yellow mark on the back of his hand glowed.

*Shiing!* The bolt stabbed Gryven's wrist to the ground. His mouth flew open, his tongue quivering.

Ethan grinned and pointed the crossbow at the goblin's head. "I don't know what's gotten into my head but I am *really* enjoying seeing you like this... but I can't stomach this feeling for long, so die."

He pressed the trigger. The arrow sliced its way into Gryven's head.

Level II Goblin dispatched to the afterlife.

Transferring Prana and Source to the hunter...

+22 Prana, +Source Points

An abrupt pain shot through Ethan's head. He fell to his knees and clutched his head, throbbing as it would split open at any moment.

*"Master, stay calm. It's the aftereffect of your soul assimilating with the Source of someone an entire rank higher above you."*

Alyssia tried to pat his head with her little hands, bringing a smile to his twisted face. The suffering lasted for a few seconds before everything around him became calm.

Sufficient Source Points acquired.

Commencing Level up process.

You are now a Level 3.

You are now a Level 4.

You can unlock six more Aspects.

*Two levels up...*

Ethan plopped down on his butt. Alyssia hopped down, showing off her horn glowing with her chest puffed up.

*"Master, I leveled up too!"*

"How? Is the Source distributed between us?"

*"It is the reason we call this pact the 'Sacred Oath'. The Spirit Beast and the contractor are agreeing to the oath written by the Dragon where they vow to protect each other with their life. The contractor gets new Aspects which can be converted into useful skills while a Spirit Beast gets a chance to share a part of the Source earned by the contractor."*

Dragons again... their influence on the world seemed immense. He couldn't wait to meet a friendly one.

Ethan stretched his fist toward Alyssia and Lulu. "Let's grow stronger together."

Alyssia tilted her head, unknown to the 'fistbump' gesture. Lulu, on the other hand, lightly bit his head, tickling a little.

Ethan shook his head and turned to Gryven. The violent feeling had settled with the death of the goblin.

"It's survival of the fittest, buddy. Hope you become a good man in your next life."

He examined the mark on the back of Gryven's hand. Three pairs of eyes with a sword going down its center. "Scan."

***Artificial Earth Spirit***

*Rank: Rare*

*An ingenious way of bestowing the blessing of earth magic to those who*

*aren't allowed to have any affinity by the world. It grants the user an ability to manipulate the earth elemental force.*

This looked useful.

*"Master, let's move before the smell of blood attracts the Scavenger wolves."*

The image of ravenous wolves hopped in his mind. "The wolves we met before?"

Alyssia nodded. Ethan collected everything and rose. A moan from the bear prompted him to turn. Its beady blue eyes seemed wet with tears.

"Alyssia, is it a female?"

*"It should be. Only female bears roam during the night. The male always hid in their caves."*

"Are you *sure*?"

The success of his plan revolved around a simple question "Is it a female?"

"We can check it. Female dream bears have a layer of blue skin behind their ears. Males have this on their chest."

Ethan touched the bear's ears and a sticky sensation was transmitted to his fingers. The bear was a female.

He stepped back and briefed the situation inside his mind. The bear's wounds had no external signs—the impact of falling ten plus feet hurt her internals.

"Lulu, can you create a portal to our cave?"

The bear won't be able to walk even if he stuffed her full of Dreamnight fruits. Staying here will be like sending an invitation to the wolves. If it was Void, he had confidence in dragging the bear all on his own.

Lulu discussed something with other shadow rabbits. They took position and the familiar black tendrils waived out, creating a new portal. Ethan and others forced the bear into the portal.

*Done.*

Ethan felt the destructive power surging through him. He pushed the bear with only one hand.

*So op.*

This was without him unlocking the Void Aspect. What if he brought someone to this portal and wrecked their ass? It would be pretty easy.

Easy level ups.

His mind wandered to every possible strategy. Void, the nothing, the emptiness. Why did it accept him as its dweller? So many mysteries to uncover.

*Why am I getting summoned here? I swear to find the answer one day.*

Following Lulu's directions, he returned to the cave with the bear and Gryven's corpse.