

Chapter 186: Character Creation

A cold light illuminated the hundred-meter-sided cube. The metallic floor held rows of various machines obeying strict algorithms. Arnold NetSky, the owner of this internal world, adamantly refused to let an AI oversee the factory. His consciousness embedded in a surveillance unit, the Var Elegis protocols monitored robots coming from a stabilized rift. This portal was connected to a pocket realm which was excavated by his machines.

The tons of collected earth were transported to large tanks, each filled with water and magnetic particles for magnetic density separation. Diverse metallic, organic, and mineral elements were classified, collected, and stored. If any doubts lingered, optical techniques finalized the sorting.

This was crucial for Arnold because, unlike his rivals, his organism was silicon-based rather than carbon-based. To restore a lost limb, he couldn't simply consume local flora or fauna. He had to extract the matter from the ground, a laborious process.

It was tedious because his victory against the necro Envoy had been Pyrrhic. Only the destabilization of the summoning portal, a method he had acquired from the Princess, had made it possible. Even so, sacrifices had been necessary to defeat the servant of the Necromoon.

His survival had been ensured only at the cost of **[Legendary Token - Save]**. The reward from the sixty-fifth wave of the Colosseum had allowed him to retain his life after the fusion of his atomic heart. Even so, the Var Elegis had lost his physical body.

Arnold had no regrets about his decision. Thanks to it, he had obtained the title of Elysian Duke and its inherent privileges. The upgrade from the Sun Shop had been particularly appreciated and had allowed him to advance his project: the construction of a new body.

To the gentle hum of machinery, the Var Elegis monitored the machines putting the finishing touches on his new vessel. Created from the rewards he had received since the Tutorial, his new physique would enable him to confront Tier 3 opponents head-on.

An incredible prospect for a Tier 0 but insufficient. According to the Princess, the three tribes were led by Tier 4s.

The processors of Var Elegis were already searching for methods to counter this new threat. *Perhaps it is time to visit the First?*

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Secure in an underground base, Esmée Lóthandorim observed the draconic egg. Her reward. A Sun Wurm slumbered within, waiting to unleash his power upon the world. Unfortunately, his glory would be short-lived as the creature belonged to her brother.

Aydan had forbidden her from bonding with the noble beast. He had spent his Sun points to obtain Holy Guardian III. As a Viscount, her brother couldn't purchase the fourth upgrade, reserved for Earls. Because of this, the creature's potential was limited.

The egg trembled, releasing a gentle warmth. The Sun could be destructive, but it could also exude a certain vitality.

"Disappointed?" a voice asked behind her.

Esmée rose, dusting off her dress and inclining her head.

"No, my brother, this reward is rightfully yours by birth."

The response brought a smile to the prince's face, and Esmée struggled to hold back laughter. Despite his intelligence, Aydan was easily manipulable when his ego was stroked. The prince approached the egg and caressed it.

"It will be magnificent," murmured Aydan.

Esmée nodded. For once, her brother was right. "Are you taking good care of him?"

"I'm constantly rewriting probabilities to ensure his bloodline is as powerful as possible. He'll be a variant."

"A variant?" Her brother looked into her eyes for the first time.

"All stars are different, and some shine brighter than others. The System limits the Holy Guardians, but two beasts are not necessarily equal. Your Sun Wyrms will be a king among kings," declared Esmée.

"Excellent. I want you to dedicate yourself fully to this task."

"What about household chores?"

"To hell with cooking and dishes. You were a mediocre cook anyway. Gaëtan will handle it from now on. I want my Sun Wyrms to destroy our rivals and defend us against those tribes of savages, understand?"

Esmée concealed a smile before nodding. "It shall be done according to your orders."

"Of course. Any news from the Var Elegis?"

"Nothing since he gave us the rift's location."

Arnold had provided them with the location of an unstable rift leading to another world. Esmée had then worked for days to force the corrupted to summon a necro Envoy. The Tier 3 Earl had been *unlucky*: the rift had telescoped the summoning portal, dragging the monster into a fatal space storm. The System had not deemed Esmée worthy of an Achievement, but

her role in its death had earned her almost a quarter of a million Sun points and the Title of Marquess.

"As long as he doesn't attack us... I leave you with my future mount. You are authorized to purchase anything useful for his growth. Nothing else," Aydan said as he exited the room.

Esmée bowed and only raised her head once her brother was gone. How difficult it was to obey a fool. He hadn't even realized that his orders allowed Esmée to consume resources as long as they were potentially useful to the Wyrms. Her brother wouldn't have made that mistake with a man, but Esmée was a woman. *As always, my weakness is my strength.*

Opening her grimoire, the princess took her pen and continued manipulating probabilities. It was in her interest for the Sun Wyrms to be strong. Strong enough for her brother to think he had a chance against the First, the Var Elegis, or some other virtually immortal monster with a low tolerance for stupidity.

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Louis took Mirscella in a princess carry, a worried expression on his face.

"Are you sure she's okay?"

"... She's breathing, and Domain detects no physical injuries," replied Priam. "We should check with the Guardian of Secrets for more information."

Priam could have learned more using **[Tribulation Hunter]** or **[Diagnostic]**, but his severed meridians prevented him from using his aether. Of his active skills, only his system, directly connected to his soul, continued to function.

Nodding, Louis crossed the portal with Mirscella, giving a forced wink to Jasmine. "You got this."

"Of course," smiled the young woman.

Once alone, Priam sat cross-legged in front of Jasmine. The two rivals took each other's hands and closed their eyes.

Priam activated **[Primogenitor]** and felt the Title scan Jasmine. His brain received a terrifying amount of information that his Assistant began to compute.

[Jasmine Kaldwin - MKX Arkanian.

Genome analyzed at 100%.

*Connection with **[Primogenitor]**, **[Diagnostic]**, and **[Humanoid Anatomy]**... Error, **[Diagnostic]** impossible due to severed meridians.*

*Connection with **[Primogenitor]** and **[Humanoid Anatomy]** established.*

Subject Jasmine Kaldwin is compatible with [Primogenitor]: possible race change. The subject's genome has already been analyzed; no additional Potential is required.

Would you use the standard Homo Elysian model or custom it?]

Custom it.

With closed eyes, Priam felt his add-on create a mental space to help modify Jasmine's future body characteristics. In front of him, a three-dimensional model appeared: his own naked body. Being the only existing Homo Elysian, he was the only entry in the database of his system.

"This world can't handle two Priams. If you don't mind, I'd prefer to remain a woman," an amused voice said.

Priam groaned, recognizing Jasmine's voice. Thanks to the connection between their souls, she could access the mental space created by their shared system. Priam hesitated for a moment to cover the nudity of the model before deciding against it. If he showed Jasmine that he was modest, she would make fun of him.

"Being a male is simpler; we don't have breasts to throw us off balance."

"I'm used to it. Besides, a generous chest helps divert my victims' attention."

"It wasn't very effective on Arnold and Kazuki," remarked Priam.

"No, but I almost succeeded with you," teased Jasmine.

Priam internally winced, remembering Jasmine's initial capture. The young woman was very attractive, and without **[Focus]**, he could have been distracted. *Assistant, monitor my emotions and trigger **[Focus]** and **[Emotional Discipline]** when distraction is untimely.*

[New routine created.]

"Hurry up and create your new body before I give you a unibrow."

"Wait, I can customize my appearance?!"

"Like in any good RPG."

"Nice!"

Jasmine's attention focused on Priam's naked body model, who waited in silence. It took only a few moments before he felt her curiosity.

"Is there an issue with my body?"

"Why did you keep fur on your body?"

Priam burst into laughter.

"These are hairs. Most humans are born with them. Don't you have hair on Arkana?"

Priam found it strange because Jasmine looked like a young human woman in her twenties. Some of her organs were different, and a few mutations existed, but the differences between a human and an Arkanian were internal rather than external.

"I don't think so? I mostly dealt with the criminal underworld; many shaved their heads to leave no traces behind. Anyone born with that would definitely pluck them. Even the nobles avoided leaving their DNA lying around," explained Jasmine.

"... Make sense. In any case, you can remove them," replied Priam, asking his system to remove the hair from the model. Jasmine remained silent for a moment before asking hesitantly.

"If my race resets my body, will my scars disappear?"

Thanks to their mental link, Priam conveyed the equivalent of a nod. "Is there a problem?"

"There's a rune branded on my heart indicating my affiliation with my organization. It's a kill switch."

Priam shuddered upon hearing that. He hesitated for a moment before simply saying what he thought.

"That's barbaric. I'm sorry you had to suffer like that."

"It's in the past," replied Jasmine. "I... I'll have to talk to you about some things before the next Reunion."

"Does it concern your organization?" Priam saw no point in delaying an important discussion.

"Yes. They controlled me through this kill switch. They invested too much in my education to let me go. I know their secrets, their training, their skills... They'll try to buy me back."

Jasmine's voice trembled.

"I've already told you, you're not a slave: no one will buy you," said Priam.

"They won't take no for an answer."

"The only other answer will be Promesse."

A note of terror crept into Jasmine's voice. "They have Tier 3s under their command."

"The System calls me Death's Obsession." Tier 3s were currently too powerful for him, but Priam was convinced that would change by the start of the Reunion.

"They'll go after Alain, Rose, or Louis. They—"

"They will die," Priam interrupted, a note of fury in his voice. "I will make arrangements to protect the others. We can figure it out together if you want."

Turning his family into Homo Elysians, entrusting them with a sub-system, keeping them in Concepts Archipelago... Priam wouldn't let anyone harm his loved ones.

"Jasmine, you grew up seeing your organization as something monumental, but in six months, you'll destroy those Tier 3s. This new race will help you, and this quadruple Tribulation too. Trust yourself."

"... Okay."

A seed of hope appeared in the young woman's heart. She was the only one who could make it grow.

"Let's continue this race change," Priam suggested.

Jasmine nodded before starting to customize the model. Gradually, it began to take on Jasmine's current appearance.

"Do you want to finish alone?" Priam asked politely. Jasmine was a gorgeous woman, but he didn't want to take advantage of this race change to ogle at her.

"With your Domain, you already know what I look like naked," replied Jasmine, shrugging. "It's nice of you to offer, but I prefer you here to tell me if I make a mistake."

"As you wish."

The assassin slightly increased her height, subtly changed the roots of her hair, the placement of her nails, and the alignment of her teeth. As her appearance approached the divine, she changed the color of her black eyes. Soon, a beautiful light gray iris reflected Priam's gaze.

"That was my mother's eye color..."

"It's pretty."

A few seconds later, Jasmine let her system modify internal organs before declaring herself satisfied.

"What do you think?" she asked joyfully.

"What do you mean?"

"Physically. Do I look good?"

Priam observed Jasmine's naked model, trying to keep a critical eye. Her features were graceful, her curves harmonious, her dimples adorable, and her smile charming. With her wild hair cascading along her back and her firm muscles, she looked feline. The young woman was stunning, but Priam hesitated to admit it. Jasmine was his subordinate, and as long as she was, he only wanted a professional relationship.

"Beauty is subjective—."

Jasmine cut him off. "Assassination is much simpler when the target wants to sleep with me. They take me to a quiet corner where I can plunge a dagger into their heart. Would you want to sleep with this body?"

Something about Jasmine's sentence displeased Priam.

"You talk about your body as if it were an object."

"A weapon. My appearance is a blade that must be sharpened."

"Is that what your organization taught you?" Priam winced. Jasmine didn't miss the disapproving note in his voice. He felt anger rising in her, but she remained silent.

"Sorry, I shouldn't judge you without knowing your past. It's just that..."

"That you don't need to be sly to win your fights. You think you're better than that," Jasmine finished.

Priam thought for a moment about his encounter with Sumstreh. He had needed to lie, to cheat to survive. *I'm a hypocrite*. Jasmine didn't have his immortality. She had to put her pride aside to stay alive, and he couldn't judge her for that.

"You hate the organization that trained you, but you don't deny the education you received," Priam understood.

"I didn't train all my life to seduce, fight, and wield shadows for nothing. I hate my teachers, but I cherish their teachings," confirmed Jasmine.

"I admire your pragmatism. Forgive me for judging you; you do what you want with your body."

Thanks to their link, Priam felt Jasmine's surprise and then gratitude.

"What?" he asked.

"Few leaders acknowledge their mistakes."

"Yet it's the best way to progress. If you think I'm making a mistake, tell me." Jasmine nodded. "Anyway, do you confirm this appearance? I don't see how you could improve it further."

Jasmine smiled at the veiled compliment. "This body suits me. And now?"

"Brace yourself; it's going to hurt," Priam warned, activating **[Primogenitor]**.

The Title replaced Osiris' ritual. The ambient aether trembled before rushing into Jasmine's body, modifying her genome. A few seconds later, she let out a groan of pain as the ritual ended. She only had to recreate her body to finish the race upgrade.

But first, she had to trigger her Tribulations.

Priam quickly stood up before opening a portal behind him.

"Try to beat my record," he said.

Hiding a grimace, Jasmine gave him a thumbs up.

The portal closed behind Priam as his internal world trembled. The Tribulations were beginning.

A scream made him turn around.

Louis had just collapsed in front of the Menhir of Secrets. Above him, Mirscella held a dagger covered in blood.

Her eyes gleamed with a crimson light.

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Status:

PHYSICAL:

Strength 489

Constitution 856

Agility 473

Vitality 765

Perception 685

MENTAL:

Vivacity 421

Dexterity 538

Memory 318

Willpower 925

Charisma 585

META:

Meta-affinity 418

Meta-focus 350

Meta-endurance 296

Meta-perception 204

Meta-chance 230

Meta-authority 30

Potential: 1940

Tier 0

Sun points: 53 122

[He Who Eludes Death] charge: OFF. Reloaded in 12 hours 59 minutes 9 seconds.

[Tribulation]: Three Tribulations pending.

Future Tribulations delayed until:

Time: 166 days 13 hours 32 minutes 2 seconds.

Next thresholds: 6 attributes > 600 / 3 attributes > 900