

## Chapter 64

### The Audit (Part II)

“As a matter of fact, there is something I find disagreeable!” Simulacrum me says, and just like that, I can feel the sharks come alive and all but wiggling their way closer. As if smelling blood in the water, all four auditors come forward as a faint smile appears on their eyes. Apparently Cassiopeia, or rather me, I was the one they wanted. I am still connected to *her* senses, I can still see and hear everything she is saying and doing, there is just one slight problem I cannot control this version of me. I can’t tell her to stop, to be quiet, I can’t tell her any of these things. In fact, the only thing I can really do to stop her is to unsummon her, but doing that will only cause more problems than it would solve right now.

“Oh, and what is that?” Was all Trista Preventine said, her head cocking to the side as she tried to come across as inquisitive, but her posture and features all screamed that she was overly excited. Seeing the features directly with Simulacrum Cass’s actual eyes was an odd experience for me. I could feel my skills working and helping me quickly deduce everything that was going on, but I felt so slow. I felt like my sensations were delayed for just a moment, fortunately I still had the complete overlap with my **Angel’s Sight** which let me overshadow the entire area in a giant bubble of near omnipotence. The difference between the two was staggering and I realized just how powerful my twenty-five-point merit truly was. I mean Simulacrum Cass’ field of vision ended with a wall of all things. How could anyone cheat like that?

Then as if finally able to respond to something that had clearly bothered her for quite a while, my Simulacrum took in a deep breath, before letting it out. Then she began, “well I have to say I do not appreciate my conditions here.”

“Your conditions?” Trista asks, as the others all begin to swarm around, all trying to get a better view of Cass.

At this, I can only hold my breath, as my foot begins tapping almost impatiently at this. I normally don’t let the words and actions of others affect me, as I learned long ago that I can only control what I can control. Yet, in this case, with my Simulacrum being the sole instigator of this, I can only sit back and watch.

“Yes, when I first got here, I was hired on as an interim healer, basically I was unproven, I had never been a legitimate healer, let alone for a branch of the Mage’s guild. So I was provided with a two contracts that by now honestly feel a little insulting given the scope of what I have accomplished.” Cass began, and then shared her two quests that all but forced her to be trapped here for a year.

**Quest Complete: Not The Healer They Wanted...:** *You agreed to become the resident healer for the Crossroads branch of the Mage's Guild. During your time you took it upon yourself to become a true doctor of healing, you were required to find and internalize twenty-five items of scientific knowledge related to healing, you not only met but exceeded that standard (50/25). Rewards: Experience, Skills (already gained), New Badge: Healer of Valor (250), chance to gain a position of power within Crossroad's Mage's Guildhall.*

**New Quest: Crossroad's Mage's Guildhall Healer:** *Your exemplary service has earned you the chance to become the full-time lead Healer for the Crossroad Mage's Guild. This will be a contract that will last exactly one year, after which time you will be allowed to once again explore or transfer your status to another Mage's Guildhall with a Healer Vacancy. This position comes with its own perks, to include but not limited to continual daily quests, monthly spending funds to improve the clinic, and full access to the Mage's Guild Library (even all parts of the restricted section).*

Seeing the quests, Trista paused, as she tried to understand what was happening.

"I don't understand, these are not quests that your Guild Master provided, but quests that seem to have generated with the independent auditor from the Mage's Guild?" Trista said, with a questioning tone to her voice.

Cass, or rather my simulacrum, just waved a dismissive hand. "I understand that, but the terms and conditions laid out here are embarrassing, especially considering the events I have caused, and the sacrifices I have made for this guild. I am stuck here, a prisoner to the guild, unable to go out, to level on my own. Recently the guild master has worked with us, providing us workarounds, trying to help us, even though we all feel confined here. Yet, it isn't enough, when our only real reward from the guild are minor rewards and belittling quests from the Mage's Guild proper."

"What? Those are exceptional rewards for an unproven healer, in fact there was push back on the auditor's initial choice."

“I understand that, but since I’ve gotten here, I have created six new spells, all related to healing. One of which is a Tier IX spell.” Cass said, and then flashed the record of her earning a badge, not the actual badge itself, and not the one she was referring to.

***New Feat Recorded: Resurrector (250).*** *You managed to bring someone back from the dead, your way just happens to be a bit more humane than the others.*

“Oh woops, my mistake, that was not the record I wanted to display, sorry one second.” Cass said, as she then took a second, before pausing and letting the image be displayed before everyone. Then she showed her next title.

***New Feat Recorded: Master Tier Spell Creator (500).*** *You managed to create a spell that was at the ranking of Tier IX or higher, wait until people ask you what it was.*

“There we go, that was the one I wanted to display. Sorry they were right next to each other. So yeah, during my time here I have earned these two badges, along with receiving nothing more than a paltry repeatable task for curing people of the *Blight*.” Cass states.

Watching myself at work, I can’t help but be impressed, she, or rather I come across as slightly aloof, but I can tell that it is all methodical, that I am building up to something, but the only problem is, I don’t know what my goal of this whole charade is. Then I realize I am captivated by this display, and oddly enough I am not the only one, the other four auditors are similarly on the balls of their feet, waiting to understand what the point of this whole display is.

“Those are impressive, but I fail to see how this has anything to do with a grievance with the Guild?” Trista asks.

Hearing that Cass just shakes her head, as a faint look of betrayal crosses her face. Seeing her, the auditors all wince back in pain as they try to understand what is happening.

“So it’s a systemic thing? Something the entire Guild endorses, being sarcastic and demeaning to people out here changing the world, trying to make the world a better place. All we can expect is to be mocked and ridiculed?” Cass says.

“What, who would dare mock you?” Trista and the others looked enraged, “was it that no good Guild Master?”

“No, it is you, the people of the guild who assigned me this task. Everyday I come here and try my best, I go, I heal everyone who comes here. I heal them, I even start a book club for those few who I cannot heal, as a means to give back to the community, and yet everyday I wake up and am met with a mocking reminder that I mean nothing to the guild.” Cass says, by the end of her speech even I am left confused, as I want to ask the same question that is on everyone’s mind.

“What?”

“My quest, my sole purpose to be here. Every day I am reminded that I was a filler, someone who happened to be at the right place at the right time. For as the quest states, I am ‘Not the Healer They Wanted...’” There is a slight pause, as Cass waits for a second, letting that thought sink in.

“But that quest states it was completed? That is not the binding quest to the Mage’s Guild.” Trista explains.

At that Cass just shakes her head. “I agree, it does state that it is completed. Yet, even after all this time, the Mage’s Guild has not held up their end of the bargain.”

“What do you mean, you are the lead Healer for the Crossroad mage’s guild, are you not?”

“That I might be, but I have neither received the experience, nor the posted badge for this. At the time I was so caught up with the fact that I had achieved the impossible, earned the right to become called a healer, that I forgot it. Yet, as time goes on, the quest still remains, as I have more than fulfilled my obligations to the guild, but I have never been rewarded for not only meeting the standards set by my auditor, but exceeding them as well.”

*Silence.*

Even I was impressed with my own brazen act. Wow, just wow. That was so awesome. I couldn’t help but feel that this was perfect, and truth be told it was something that had bothered me for a bit. And at the time I thought it would just be something that would be taken care of at the end of the year, you know

go to the main Mage's Guild hall and get officially recognized there. But according to the quest chain, the quest itself was completed. That meant the rewards should have been provided, yet they were being delayed for some reason.

Wow, look at Cass, I mean me, standing up for myself, that is awesome.

"We will have to look into this." Trista said, as her eyes went wide, once again looking at the two quests that came from the Guild Inspector. There was a slight pause, as Trista shook her head and then refocused on me, well on Cass. "While this is something that we can and do cover, what brought us here is the fact that we have noticed that the guild master has made a number of daily repeatable quests and assigned them to the different members of the guild. Given the fact that so many of them are being accomplished, we wanted to take a moment and make sure nothing unscrupulous was happening."

"Unscrupulous? You mean, other than getting short changed for my work?" Cass asks.

Again, with this Cass has said the magic words as I can all but see the faces of the four auditors perk up in unison at this comment. It doesn't hurt that one is a Beastkin with obvious bear ears, while the other is an elf with the typical knife ears, their twitching is a dead giveaway of intention even to visible light spectrum bound Simulacrum Cass's eyes.

"So you are being forced to do extra to receive these quests?"

"I'd say so. Do you know what the average experience gained by people that come here to get cured of the *Blight* is? A hundred thousand experience. Each one. That's right a hundred thousand experience for just coming here and getting healed. The first person to do so even got a badge for this. Whereas do you know what I get for this? For slaving away for hours just to heal one person of the *Blight*?"

"How much?"

"One hundred, yes, one one-thousandth of what the people I am healing gain. Granted I can do it multiple times, but do you think such an exchange is fair? Some of the people who come here looking to be cured are on death's door, just lying there. Their whole tether to life, their whole hope to live another day resides in me. Do you know what getting one one-hundredth of what I should get does to morale? I mean, how am I going to not only stay here, but feel that I am actually wanted as something more than a simple number and a check in a box to the main mage's guild. If this is how you treat your healers, no

wonder they have a hard time sticking around. I've dedicated my whole existence to this, but clearly I care more about the Mage's Guild and my role and responsibility here than anyone at the grand mage's guild hall. Do you even know what we do out here?"

At that, Trista pauses, never having been forced to be on the defensive so much from just one interviewee. Then again, they never met someone like me, it was so odd to see how I would react, this was me, these were thoughts that I always had in the back of my mind, but never expressed. Generally I would never comment on these types of things, sure I would comment on the way others are treated, as I would be the first person to comment on the way someone else was being mistreated by the system, but I never did this.

Then a chill hits me, as I realize my own motivations, my Simulacrum isn't doing this for her, rather she is doing it for me. At least that is what I think she is doing, that she is doing this all to protect me, well us, as I can instantly see the multitude of angles this can accomplish our goals. In this case, our goal is to divert attention away from me, by giving a clear area for these auditors to focus on, then I will have a better chance of going undetected as an impostor of the Guild Master, but I will also maybe get some more recognition from they game itself about my contributions out here. Granted I already have a following apparently, but those are real life viewers, who unfortunately don't do anything for me. I have the **Dark Horse** flaw, which permanently bans me from getting an outside world endorsement that would benefit me in here, but that has not stopped my fame from growing on the outside world. No doubt this stunt will likely cause even more confusion, as my personality might seem to have changed. Honestly it hasn't that much, I have always been fiercely protective of my own family, but it takes a lot for someone to become on the level of family for me. Hector and Gollum were close, but they always had their own circles that they roamed in, circles that I often couldn't join due to either my avatar age, or different circumstances, like not having a class.

Pausing at this, I wait to hear what I will say and do next.

"Well I know you all deal with spirits, but seeing some of the records that have been sent back to us, I also see that you are correct. A number of high-level living adventurers come here seeking treatment, at least according to the receptionist logs." Trista says, as she casts some bureaucratic spell, one that lets her track the influx of people and spirits and see where and who they come to visit. While the list is upside down and backwards to my Simulacrum's eyes, they are perfectly legible to me.

*People Who arrived at the Crossroads Mage's Guild Hall – Cassiopeia Spiritlight – Mage Guild Healer  
Midnight Mallory. Reason for coming: Curing The Blight, Status: Cured. Time: 01 Hours, 28 Minutes.  
Date...*

*Charles Ashcroft. Reason for coming: Curing the Blight, **Note:** had to be resurrected during the procedure, Status: Cured. Time: 8 Hours, 41 Minutes. Date...*

On and on the list went, each list denoting my contributions and at the end, how much experience I gained for the challenge. Each time I only earned 100 experience from the operation. Granted I did earn more from learning the spells that were required to complete the quest, but that is still a paltry amount considering the amount of effort going into each operation.

The more the auditors looked, the more I could see their jaws slowly drop as they realized exactly what I had done. In fact, reading it like this somehow felt more exciting than actually doing the procedures, well who was I kidding, not it wasn't. Not going to lie, doing the procedures, saving people's lives by coming up with a random solution to a problem, that was a thrill. It was like solving a puzzle where the only limit to the ways we could solve it was how imaginative we were. Honestly magic is the best, having it, holding it, and wielding it like I am, like I've been able to, it has been a dream come true. And I likely would have done these quests for free if asked. Just helping people is an amazing thing, but then again there are people who do a lot less than what I do and get a lot more as a reward.

So if these auditors are here, likely in some round about way to cause trouble for me, my Simulacrum decided that she would send that trouble right back at them.

"I apologize. We had no idea you were doing so much out here." Trista said, as she then cast another bureaucracy spell and solidified the document that she was viewing, making it fully tangible. Then a second spell took that document, produced three copies, and those three copies were then handed out to the three fellow auditors, who looked at the document, then nodded in unison before each filing the form away.

Honestly, I don't know what is scarier, the fact that there are spells for bureaucracy, spells designed specifically to create paperwork in triplicate, or the fact that I could see myself reverse engineering those spells and recasting them myself.

"Right, well. You have my word that we will look into your case of the completed quest that was not properly awarded. Also, we will see to improving your salary. I can see that you are clearly at the maximum allowed, even with an exception for your daily quests. But this only takes into account the most serious of patients. You get nothing for treating the common person who comes here seeking your assistance. You even managed to cure *blinding toxin spores*." At that, Trista pauses, as shock fills her face. In an instance I know that she knows she has said too much, but about what?

*Silence.*

Then in the silence comes a new quest update, letting me know that I have just received a new fact related to an ongoing quest.

**Quest Update: *The Toxic Nature of Crossroads*:** *You have found that the guards of crossroads have been slowly poisoned by blinding toxic spores, what these are? Where they come from? You need to find out what made all the guards go blind. Reward: variable.*

Seeing that, I wonder what else these auditors might be able to tell me about this ongoing quest.

“I just have one question.” Simulacrum Cass asks.

“What is it?” Trista asks, her posture changing as she seems to be a little defensive about what I might ask. I can tell from her surface thoughts that she is worried that I might ask more about the spores, but I and my Simulacrum and I are in lock step, in our next set of questions that she asks for the two of us.

“Just how safe is it here in the Crossroads?”