

Authors note: Minor retcon from book 4. Matt no longer figures out how to make all the aura rifts during that time and only the basic four. Old Mantis gave Matt too much too quickly, *offscreen*, and I want to actually show the process here and now.

“Within the year, they found the recipe for creating Aura of the basic mana types of fire, water, earth, and air, while also making more abstract Auras like sharpness. In their testing, they even created Aura for the other weapon types, like blunt weapons, staves, axes, polearms, spears, and such. Though, the more abstract their experiments became, the harder the intended Aura was to create.

They were able to create Aura for a few of the dual elements, but not all of them. Oddly enough, mist and magma were easy to create Aura for, taking almost no effort and being easily re-creatable. The rest were far more hit or miss, for reasons they couldn’t determine.”

Is reduced to "Within the year they only managed to nail down the four basic elements."

I hate doing retcons but this was just wayyyyyy too much to try and work around and its way more fun to *show* the process of figuring out how to get those types of aura.

Chapter 350

From the latest reports, it would take Erwin another month or two before he and their first team members would be arriving, but Matt wanted to get started *now*. He had a perfectly good guild complex to play in, and he was damn well going to use it.

Back when he was Tier 6 and making aura rifts with Erwin, they had only been able to reliably make aura rifts from Tiers 6 through 9. After they had given the research to Manny, and he had put his own teams on the project, they had discovered a way to reliably make Tier 5, and more importantly, Tier 4 aura rifts.

By far the largest demographic in need of aura were Tier 4s. Giving them the ability to gather aura themselves would enable a new scale of production of aura, as lower Tier rifts were cheaper to run and more of them could be created. Some higher Tier worlds’ lords would undoubtedly create Tier 6 or 7 rifts to maximize the amount of monsters per instance, but Tier 4s would find it difficult to afford the costs associated with that aura until all people who had used one bottled Concept had gotten their hands on the higher Tier aura.

Matt had been given an information packet with the exact details of how they had managed that, but he wanted to figure that step out on his own.

Or his guild’s own.

This was most certainly going to be a team effort, which is why the few guild members they had recruited already were damn good at their jobs.

Tholly, as if reading Matt's mind, interrupted him. "Sir, it would be prudent to fill the central mana stone sooner than later."

Acknowledging that the spy was right, Matt went and charged the central spire of his guild's entrance hall. It was a little ostentatious, but the massive rechargeable mana stone brimming with power made a statement to anyone who saw it.

Once he finished that and Tholly went to settle into his kitchen, Matt went back to the open area that was set aside for aperology.

Pulling out a blank Tier 25 formation plate, Matt paused as he really looked at the complicated premade formation plate.

It might look like iron, but it was an expensive alloy of metals further augmented by alchemical washing that ensured the plates were incredible conductors of magical energies, and also strong enough to handle hundreds of thousands of mana flowing through them without degradation.

This plate in particular was one he had grabbed from Camp Lightfoot, and was made to military standards which, while not the best, had a higher floor of acceptable quality than some of the civilian plates that were cheaper. The plate was perfect for a Tier 26 like Matt, who could afford the cost as it allowed for not just stronger enchantments, but ensured they lasted longer.

Which was exactly why Matt couldn't use them.

His aura rift and all items coming out of his guild needed to be replicable for, if not low Tiers, then barons and lower Tier guilds who would be ruling the Tier 5 and under worlds the rifts would be most useful in.

That didn't mean Matt couldn't use the higher Tier plates and then work on making the formations work on lower Tiers after they figured something out that worked, and that might even be the correct play, but it felt wrong.

Aperology was technically a science, but to Matt, it was more like an art form. Instinct and vibes had always played a significant role in his aperology, and right now, he felt like he needed to use lower Tier formation plates.

To that end, he cast a quick [Portal] to the capital of Lily while shifting his mask's appearance so people wouldn't identify him.

Once at the city, he went on a mini buying spree and bought out three different shops' blank Tier 5 formation plates.

They were cheap and mass produced, which was exactly the type of plate that his poorest customers would be using. Although, if his plans for his guild are remotely successful, he was confident a standardized aperology design would hit the market, like so many other basic functions such as temperature control. Come to think of it, maybe he should have his guild work on said design at some point.

New plates in hand, Matt started sketching out the isolation formations, and he was immediately grateful he bought the cheaper plates. Their low Tier materials prevented him from using the more complex runes he knew thanks to their limited engraving space, and forced him to think outside the box.

Carefully laying out the formation plates to create the circle in the courtyard reserved for rifts, Matt used a combination of [Telekinesis], [Metal Manipulation], and [Wood Manipulation] to carve the runes he would need into each of the plates.

As testing proceeded, they'd need to use increasingly more-complex runes that *nobody*, with the probable exception of some Talented enchanter somewhere, could freehand. But he had tools for when that day came. Still, it was undeniably satisfying to simply wave his hand and create dozens of the same formation plates that, as a Tier 6, he'd spent hours dutifully carving.

Using his mana ring, he filled the enclosure with a freshly awakened Tier 1's mana, which was as neutral as mana got besides rift mana stones. Even if that step probably wasn't strictly necessary, it was a baseline that anyone could replicate. Which made it a good starting point for all of his next tests as regions on planets, let alone planets themselves, could have subtly different mana makeups.

With as good of a base as he could manage, Matt moved on to create a second identical set up.

Matt hadn't done any serious aperology since he'd developed his Intent, and the new Domain stage brought with it a new sub-aspect, which they were calling 'density', to color his still neutral mana, alongside his more familiar endless sub-aspect.

While quite useful in combat, making his spells marginally more durable and difficult to dispel, they didn't know if its presence might somehow interfere with the way his endless mana frequently made aura form.

But, that's what the tests were for. It could just as easily make aura even *more* common, and there was only one way to find out.

With a flick of his fingers, he withdrew just shy of a hundred identical rift-made swords from spatial storage, and telekinetically maneuvered each blade to the center of its respective formation, satisfying the first condition for an aura rift.

Namely, a weapon. He and Erwin had speculated it was because it served as a focus of intent that was nonetheless entirely external to nearly all creatures. The fact it was specifically a channel of *attacks* might have been important, because it didn't work with shields or armor, but they hadn't had enough non-attack spellcasting foci to confirm that.

That particular test would come later. He would test it, but *later*.

In his first rift, he pumped in an old sample of his mana taken from before he created his Intent, and in the second circle, he directly channeled his mana into the formation along with the same fire mana with a hot sub-aspect that had worked so long ago.

He nearly fried the formation plates with even a paltry ten thousand mana a second, but he was able to lower the input before he did more than cause some residual light to bleed off.

A childish part of him wanted to pump his entire mana pool into the effort just to see what would happen, but he wasn't willing to ruin this test.

As the mana reached its critical point, rifts formed, taking with them roughly two-thirds of the swords seeding the rifts. Matt winced slightly, but it didn't ultimately matter.

While it was a bad first round, he had hundreds of thousands of that exact sword, and millions of identical weapons overall, spread across thousands of sets. It was simple enough to put bounties for low Tier rifts that regularly spat out identical weapons as rift rewards and pay thirty percent over market price for the weapons. He'd initially wanted to do double, but if he did so at his Tier, he'd have to not only pay the standard down-Tier purchase tax, but an additional *extra* tax for trying to corner the market so excessively.

Still, thirty percent served his purposes well enough. He might have spent the last two centuries of war fighting battles, the Empire had continued on. Rifts were still delved on cooldown, meaning he had a massive stockpile of weapons ready for rift testing.

Withdrawing and seeding a new set of swords, Matt continued to pump mana into the formation. When the rifts reached Tier 2, they let out a flood of monsters, and with his higher Tier perception he was able to watch as identical fire salamanders flooded out just to be shredded by the blades of wind and force that the formation plates cast.

That was exactly what he wanted to see, and he continued to Tier the rifts up until they reached Tier 4.

As less than five percent of the rifts de-aspected during that process, and he only needed to replace a dozen swords, Matt started to get excited. If he ignored the initial absorptions, it was an auspicious sign.

On account of nostalgia, he restrained his spiritual awareness and strode forth, entering the closest of the endless-only rifts to inspect it with his eyes. Inside, he found a fairly standard Tier 4 rift, a moderately wide canyon with a couple of streams of lava flowing down the sides.

What he didn't expect was to feel the rift trembling at his presence.

He felt like an adult stuffed into his baby clothes, buttons straining and fabric one deep breath away from tearing. He was confident that if he moved too quickly, he would collapse not only the instance of the rift, but the rift itself.

Using his Intent he cloaked his presence, firming his own reality while trying to distance himself from the local space, using the same method higher Tiers used to prevent a rift from noticing their existence and lowering rewards for low Tier delvers.

The rift seemed to almost sigh as the fabric of reality seemed to return to normal, and Matt did exactly that while wiping the sweat from his forehead.

It was the first time he had ever really felt his Tier like that before.

No matter how strong he became, he wasn't capable of destroying reality like Tier 36s and higher were able to in low Tier worlds, but a rifts instances weren't as strong as real space.

With his cloak firmly in place, Matt moved at a mortal speed to the nearest lava flow.

Even having felt his Tier, the monster, filled with the rage of the rifts, launched itself out of the lava and tried to eat his face.

Matt grabbed it with his Concept, still careful to not use too much power, and held the monster aloft as he inspected every inch of the creature.

Once he was done, he went through the rift looking at every monster including the boss encounter, which was a larger salamander whose back was aflame.

Exiting the rift, he inspected a second rift, this one made with his current endless and dense mana.

Once again, it had produced a lava canyon filled with salamanders. There were a number of differences, but at least the monsters were similar enough to make this comparison comparatively easy. He brought a salamander within arm's reach and inspected it, comparing it to the prior monster he'd looked at.

These salamanders were *denser*.

Their essence distribution was, on average, half a percent more skewed towards durability, and their skin, muscles, and bones all averaged at two-thirds of a percent heavier for the same size. It came with a bit of a penalty to their flexibility, but it was still *noticeable*. Which, considering the relative diversity the salamanders had within a single rift, was no mean feat.

Of course, that could have also just been entirely coincidental, and Matt was seeing things where they simply weren't.

There was no sign of aura yet, but that wasn't too much of an issue. He wondered if the increased density would be a consistent feature, but only time would tell there.

After dispatching the monster, Matt cleared the rift, looking for any other consistent differences between the rifts. Most of the grunt work was handled by his AI, of course, as it logged all of the ways in which the multitude of rifts were similar or different.

He then ducked back into the first rift for a minute to confirm a few observations he'd made, as there was still another ten minutes before the instance changed.

It was funny, back when he'd *been* a Tier 6, fifteen minutes seemed like nothing, but now it was practically an eternity. He could accomplish more in fifteen minutes now than he could have done in *days* back then, and it felt that long as well.

Still, his desire to do things by hand mostly fulfilled, Matt loosed his full spiritual perception, flooding into the freshly-opened instances and studying all of the rifts before him in concert.

Though not all of them had kept with their fire aspecting, Matt saw what was an ultimately standard set of rifts. He was able to confirm that his density sub-aspect *did* in fact influence monsters to have an overall increased focus on physical toughness, averaging about a one percent increase, but there was no aura to be seen.

That was annoying.

While he waited for his primary test set to reset their instances, making sure that he'd stepped into each of the rifts to start their instance timers, Matt relocated to a side courtyard for a bit of the more *artistic* side of aperology, creating rifts with variants of rune arrays, taking advantage of a lot of what he'd learned since he was Tier 6.

The first was just the same pattern without an offensive set up. From what little aperology he had learned over the years was that most guilds and planetary governments preferred to have their own separate defensive formations created in the rooms that housed the rift, which could then be activated by a guard who watched over the rift or deadman switches.

The separation made the formation plates simpler, which meant cheaper and easier to replace in the case of a malfunction. It also allowed them to change their security without impacting the rifts.

Matt knew it was his past whispering in his ear that meant he liked the idea of a built-in offensive function. Objectively, though, he knew the enchanting space was better spent on other functions.

The next iteration took advantage of the added space by adding in a secondary isolation function, typically used to isolate Seekers when they used their ability, that would hopefully help isolate the enclosed space from more outside variables than the simple mana barrier.

Each iteration built on the idea of taking advantage of the space the lack of offensive runes would have taken up, but by then, his original testbed of rifts had cycled and he spent a few seconds inspecting them all again.

There was nothing too out of the ordinary with the rifts, and still no sign of aura, so Matt went ahead and Tiered them up once again.

An annoying number of the rifts simply collapsed as he powered them above the planetary Tier, but enough stuck around that he just kept going with his tests. None of them had aura at Tier 5, and instead of waiting around for yet *another* cycle, he decided to just Tier them up to Tier 6 and see if he had any more luck there.

That turned out to be a bad idea. Attempting to create seventy-odd rifts two Tiers above Lilly's own resulted in some interesting flows in the essence that wound up starving all but four

of them, and the subsequent *collapse* of seventy-odd Tier 6 rifts somehow disrupted those four rifts as well, forcing him to start over.

He repeated the process again, and after three more failures, Matt just took it upon himself to make *two* rifts. One with his new mana, one with his old mana.

Annoyingly, even with just two rifts to work with, it still took a good dozen tries before he got both rifts at Tier 6 and not de-aspecting. But eventually, he got there, and he had to stop himself from automatically tearing the rifts apart as he caught sight of wispy, phantasmal red flames dancing across the backs of a salamander in his old, endless-only mana rifts.

Inspecting the monster, he found it was a typical flame aura salamander, and as he killed the monster, he used a bottle created to harvest the aura from the creature.

Aura could be harvested manually, but it was a slightly finicky procedure that not every low Tier could manage. Someone some time in the distant past had created a device that could automatically harvest the aura off a creature, and the bottles were staples at the few natural aura rifts.

Inspecting the small clear sight window on the protected bottle, Matt looked at the swirling red fire aura. It wasn't enough to create a potion in and of itself, but a delver would typically full clear an aura rift for the valuable resource. If the public process to alchemically stabilize aura into a medium that a cultivator could use to create their own Concept was accurate, this single rift instance should produce enough aura for two, maybe two and a half people.

If Matt could figure out how to make the rifts larger, and therefore contain more monsters, it was possible to increase that number, but it was a damn good start.

It meant that if the rift was delved perfectly every cycle, 240 to 300 people could theoretically create a Concept out of this single rift. Reality wasn't quite so kind, as some people would need multiple doses of the potion and not every monster would be perfectly harvested, no matter how good the bottles were, leading to loss. But it was a good start.

It would be far better if Matt could figure out the trick to making Tier 4 aura rifts, but he had given himself two years out of his decade to figure out the secret before he just looked at how Manny's people did it.

With anticipation building, Matt turned his attention to the other rift, made with his current endless-dense mana, only to have his hopes quashed immediately. They were practically identical to the salamanders in the other rift, but none had the all-important aura wreathing them.

There was a chance that he had just been unlucky, but Matt suspected that the addition of his new mana sub-aspect had changed things enough that the delicate balance had been disturbed.

Now that he'd confirmed he was still doing his old method correctly, Matt dispersed both rifts and re-created a Tier 6 rift with his current mana. It nearly collapsed, but it stabilized into a *forest* rift. None of the spiders inside had any aura, so he destroyed and recreated the rift again.

It collapsed instead of reaching Tier 6, so he tried again.

At last, on the ninth destruction and creation cycle, he finally found what he had been looking for. He'd nearly dispelled the rift on reflex when he saw it had de-aspected from fire, but he was glad he hadn't.

It was a meadow-like rift populated primarily by hand-sized butterflies, and... two of them, with each flap of their wings, left a ghostly afterimage in their wake, a ghostly apparition of sunshine yellow.

Aura.

But it looked... different. It might have just been his too-attentive senses playing tricks on him, but it looked *different* from the fire aura he'd just harvested, even discounting the different aspect. It looked denser, more solid, as though his second sub-aspect had given its own impact on how the aura formed.

He harvested and stored it dutifully for later study. Someone who wasn't him could determine if it had any properties meaningfully different from standard aura, but with his primary goal fulfilled, confirming that his current mana *could* still create aura rifts, he destroyed the butterfly meadow and created another handful of rifts. None had aura, but that wasn't too much of a surprise.

They'd need to do more and more careful tests to determine the exact impact his new sub-aspect had on aura-making, but he penciled in 'workable, but not ideal' as the current status of his mana. For now, he was trying to determine how to reliably make aura *without* relying on what Manny and his teams had done.

He didn't want to cheat, after all.

When given the packet, Manny had said it was within Matt's capabilities of figuring out, so that meant he just needed to start tweaking variables.

Which was exactly what he started to do.

With his mana situation sorted for now, Matt threw himself into further testing using only his older mana. Doing rifts one at a time at least made the rifts more likely to survive to Tier 6, but it also meant it took forever to get even a basic statistical analysis.

The first thing he did was to test the other four basic elements, air, water, and earth. All four regularly made aura rifts starting at Tier 6, and Matt started to test other, rarer, mana types.

After all, not everyone would be content with the basic four elements. Ideally he wanted to create a neutral aura that would work as a blank canvas that could work for any Concept type.

Unfortunately even with most of the details removed from his mind by Minkalla he still held faint impressions of just how long it took to figure neutral rifts out. So he wasn't surprised when his tentative attempts at doing so ended in utter failure. And as he was sure many craftsmen and inventors had done before him, he cursed Minkalla for letting him figure out something revolutionary and then taking it away from him. At least it meant he was confident it was possible at all.

From there, he moved on to light and shadow. Though level 1 mana types, just like the basic four, the two elements were substantially less common in nature, as evidenced by their respective manipulations showing up at Tier 14 instead of Tier 8.

The Tier 1 light rift felt odd to Matt's spiritual perception, and so he entered it just to stare in confusion.

The rift was a midair rift that had a narrow path just three feet wide, running down the center of the space in a winding path.

While rare, mid air rifts in the lower Tiers weren't that uncommon. What was uncommon were the enemies; swirling balls of light surrounding three concentric rotating rings of copper.

Matt stepped forward, off the larger platform the rift entrance was on and onto the path, where the nearest monster shot him with something that felt a bit like [Light Beam]. It definitely *wasn't* the Tier 14 skill, but it was still interesting that it had a decidedly magical ranged attack this early. Doubly so that it came from a *flying* creature. He'd never heard of a Tier 1 rift anything like it.

With a thought, Matt pulled the construct to him and studied it.

The monster kept firing the weaker light beams at him every three seconds, but Matt ignored that while he inspected the mass of magical energies in the center of the monster.

That was undoubtedly *his* mana.

The core of the monster was circulating something similar to his endless sub-aspected mana, which allowed the Tier 1 creature to exist like an elemental, but at far lower of a Tier than was normally seen.

Crushing the monster, Matt walked through the rift just getting a feel for it and quickly determined that it wasn't a rift suitable for most Tier 1 parties, but would have its uses.

The light beams the monsters shot weren't harmless, but even a Tier 1 should survive anything less than a headshot if they were wearing even the weakest armor. Melee combatants could get dodging lessons hammered into them in this rift, but ranged combatants would love

this rift as its wide open spaces and narrow ledges would force them to actually use the lessons about hitting moving targets and watching their feet placement.

Thinking about his time at the orphanage, Matt changed his mind. Guilds and anywhere who trained Tier 1 mages or archers would love this rift. The Tier 1s would probably hate it with every fiber of their being as they were forced to dodge for risk of falling into the 'abyss'.

Said abyss was only three feet below the rocky platform, the rift just didn't have enough space at Tier 1 to create endless distance for people to fall into, even if it looked like the rift went on forever. Anyone who fell would find themselves standing on seeming air as they reached the border of the rift space, but they wouldn't be in any risk of anything more than getting ribbed by their fellows, so long as they didn't break their neck on the landing.

Surprisingly enough, the boss wasn't just a larger version of the flying constructs, but instead was a cube split into eight smaller cubes that surrounded a similar core. By shuffling the faces pointing at the delver, it could change the nature of its light beam attack. One was a wide area attack reminiscent of a flashlight, the second was a stronger version of the normal attack, the third created a channeled shield around the core, and the fourth and final combination created was a charged up and much stronger version of the light beam that forced the boss to float around aimlessly as it recouped energy.

All told, it was a very interesting rift, and one Matt wanted to explore more of.

Having his expectations set so high, Matt went into the shadow mana rift to still find himself surprised.

After the open area of the light rift he had been expecting a dark and cramped rift with shadowy monsters, but he was only half right.

The rift was pitch black to his eye's sight, but that was because he was encased in a tar like substance that resisted any of his movements like a non-newtonian fluid. He had made some of the liquid in school by mixing cornstarch and water together, which when moved slowly, acted like any normal liquid, but the more force was applied to the mixture, the more it acted like a solid. So one could slowly dip their hand into the liquid, but if they tried to shove their hand into the liquid it would firm up, and it would be as solid as the walls of their school.

This darkness acted the same way, but thankfully didn't obstruct breathing in any way, so the rift wasn't a death trap to mortals.

With Matt's physical body he could break through the restriction, but a mortal would find their movements restricted to something like half of a normal speed or they would end up fighting the darkness.

Testing a theory, Matt pulled out a light and activated it and nodded as a smaller than normal area was illuminated.

The light was restricted by eighty or so percent and was practically useless.

Instead, this rift seemed like it was meant to be cleared by spiritual perception. Tier 1 spiritual perception was only a few inches, but in a higher Tier rift, this could be a useful training method to force delvers to rely on their extra sense instead of just their mundane senses.

Not that spiritual perception was perfect, but many people struggled to actually use the new sense as they should, having not grown up with it like the mundane ones.

What was interesting was that the rift was a puzzle rift, and a safe one at that.

Matt wouldn't call the arrow trap non-lethal, but the pitfall trap didn't have any spikes in it and the 'spears' that came out of the wall lacked any sharpened ends and instead were more like poles.

Combined with light sources still working, the rift was entirely clearable by Tier 1s, and they would even earn small amounts of essence for clearing the traps and obstacles without triggering the trap or not getting hit.

Leaving the rift, Matt really wanted to start playing with trying to create custom rifts, especially with variations of light and shadow mana, but he resisted the urge and instead Tiered up the rifts to Tier 6, hoping to get aura.

Dozens of failures due to the rifts de-aspecting later, Matt found neither rift produced aura. He hadn't really expected any aura from the monsters-less shadow rifts, but he had hoped the light rifts' flying constructs would have aura. But alas, he was disappointed.

Matt was sure if he spent some time and tweaked some variables that he could manage aura rifts, but for all the popularity that Zack and Allie had brought to the mana types, they were rare for anyone to specialize in at such a low Tier, so they were far down on his priority list to get aura rifts working for.

Instead, after the four basic elements, Matt's main goal was to recreate something like a sword or sharpness aura.

He wasn't sure how he was supposed to create those auras, as there wasn't a sword mana type, but weapon Concepts were very common and making an aura that was compatible for those who wished to travel down that path was a top priority.

He was contemplating how he could get close when his [AI] started getting flooded with messages.

Eclavorn: "This is unbelievable, unacceptable!"

Moe: "Something gnawing your caw?"

Eclavorn: "TufTal relocated their main factory, and their new stress toys have a weird chew to them now. They said they didn't change anything but I *know* something is off."

Matt raised an eyebrow at that.

Chew?

Did Eclavorn have a chew toy?

That couldn't be right. Could it?

Except, at Ellen's prompting, Eclavorn sent a message of a giant bone shaped rubber looking chew toy that had a set of teeth marks in its form. A dragon maw shaped row of teeth marks.

Eclavorn: "Look at it. I should have known something was off when the color was slightly infraredder than it should have been."

Matt stopped his work as he contemplated a dragon chewing on a massive chew toy and he just couldn't stop chortling.

Aster: "Oh I bet that sucks. I had a few friends at Red Feather who liked to chew and they were very particular about their implements."

Eclavorn: "For good reason! TufTal had the best ratio of give and spring back. The texture was just *superb*."

Beyond disbelief, Matt spun up a temporary sub-group with the offline bloodline-less Ascenders: "Are they fucking with us? Is this a joke?"

Brian: "Can't tell to be honest. A bottle of Steel Bones to anyone who can get a video of stick up his ass Eclavorn chewing on a chew toy."

A flurry of acceptance nearly caused Matt to miss Lila stirring the pot.

An image of her coiled around hundreds of boxes labeled 'TufTal' dropped into the chat: "And this is why you buy extra of a good things. See it and weep, fledgling."

Eclavorn immediately replied, "Send me half. I'll pay triple."

"Fat chance. These babies are all mine. Though *perhaps* once I ascend... I'll give them to Aster. Maybe I have some old unused mid-twenty bones lying around somewhere that you can try now. You *don't* know what you're missing, I need to check some old rings. Be right backkk."

Eclavorn kept sending messages asking for less and less of the chew toys, or stress balls as the dragons called them, but Lila ignored all of his messages, causing the Monster Collective dragon to nearly go apoplectic when Lila was not *right* back.

Still chuckling, Matt could only shake his head as Eclavorn not so slowly lost his mind.