

Chapter 79 Explosive

Jasia saw Lewis' group waiting for them outside, a few dozen undead corpses littering the floor and stairwell, most of them unarmed humans.

The walls shook when something impacted them.

"Got Kate and Logan out there, let's see what they're up against," Lewis said.

"Yeah, Shield ready?" Bastian asked.

They all confirmed and moved out with the other team. Jasia knew them somewhat well. Lewis, former firefighter just like Fred and Kate. Lina with her illusions, the woman freaked her out. Reymond the archer and Annika the healer were nice enough, the quiet sort. She hadn't talked to them much. And then there was Theodor. He'd been a chemist before, gave her the kind of energy she'd expect from an old nerdy teacher. Nondescript and a little awkward. She'd been surprised to hear he'd wanted to join the combatants but now she understood why, and she'd definitely wanted to be as far away from him as possible.

They moved over to a set of large windows overlooking the inner courtyard of the museum. Jasia could barely make out anything before she saw a golden glow emanate from a large sword, illuminating the staggering ogre amidst a sea of corpses. The large monster had struck one of the walls of the museum, trying now to find its enemies.

"Hold your fire," Lewis said.

Jasia had no intention of getting in the way. She watched the ogre take a step towards the knight shrouded in golden flakes of light, his sword shining on. She didn't miss the dark figure closing in from the left, stopping right behind the ogre before she shouted, a broad arcing strike of her axe cutting through the back sides of the monster's legs. Jasia hissed and looked away, having heard the snapping tendons.

"Beautiful," Lina whispered.

No it's fucking horrible, Jasia thought but looked back. She saw the ogre falling, catching itself on the ground when Logan stabbed his glowing sword into and through its skull, having moved up with what looked like a magically enhanced charge. She saw Kate cutting into the monster's back with repeated savage strikes of her axe. The monster was dead and unmoving before the woman stopped.

"Logan here, area is clear but the explosions and gunfire may have attracted more undead." Logan's voice came through Bastian's radio.

"Copy," Bastian said. "We should probably move out again then."

"Counter offer," Lewis said. "Theodor, you wanted to test some of your harder hitting creations?"

The man took in a deep breath, almost shuddering. "Oh yes, sir, I would like that."

"Logan, can you meet us up here, could use your team's support on this." Lewis said. "Bastian, if you guys want to stay as well, we could attract a larger group of undead and could use the additional firepower."

“How are we feeling, team?” Bastian asked.

Can't exactly say no at this point, can we? Jasia thought and sighed.

“Safe house is right here,” Aisha said.

It was true of course but Jasia still liked the more measured approach Bastian and her team took to fighting the undead. At the same time she couldn't deny the fact that they'd just had to be rescued by two other teams.

Logan and Kate joined them before Lewis explained the plan. Jasia didn't miss the joy on Kate's face. She didn't know if the woman was in her berserking state or not. She seemed pretty calm and nice whenever she saw her at the villa but she wouldn't be fooled by that mask.

They prepared quickly, Lewis coordinating everything with efficient commands, Bastian informing Dispatch who agreed and informed other nearby teams of what was happening at the zoological museum.

When everything was ready, Jasia watched as Kate stood at the center of the inner courtyard and raised the rifle she'd been given, shooting a salvo up into the air, then another three, until the magazine was out. She cracked a flare and threw it on the ground before she ran towards the waiting group on the first floor of the museum.

Jasia raised her brows when she saw the woman in full scale armor jump the distance of nearly five meters with a smooth motion, catching herself on one of the windows before she stepped into the museum and joined them, reloading her rifle a moment later.

“We fire on my command,” Lewis said. “Kate, everyone in range?”

“Think so, Bastian, maybe a little closer to me,” Kate answered.

Jasia could hear screeches now, undead streaming into the inner courtyard through the various archways of the large structure, rushing towards the glowing light of the flare.

They waited.

A screech from above.

“Yes!” Theodor said with a subdued but excited sound.

“Hold,” Lewis said, more undead still gathering.

The Wyvern crashed down, growling at the other undead as they all focused on the flare.

“Second one coming,” Kate said.

Jasia heard it a few seconds later, the whooshing sound of wings, a second Wyvern landing near the light.

Some of the undead started to look around, starting to wander away now that there was nothing to hunt.

“Theodor, go,” Lewis said.

“Yes, sir,” Theodor said and pressed something in his hand. Jasia could see the glee in his eyes, illuminated slightly by the light of the flare. Then she saw confusion.

He looked down at the device in his hand, pressing the button a few more times. He made to speak when a set of loud detonations shook the floor and inner courtyard, bright flashes of fire and light illuminating the monstrous horde ripped apart by the bootleg explosives, chunks of flesh and bone stripped away as bodies were flung aside, the Wyverns screeching amidst the flames, scales and wings punched through as they staggered through the plumes.

“Aim,” Lewis said, loud enough for all of them to hear.

Jasia raised her pistol.

“Fire!”

She narrowed her eyes and focused on one of the staggering undead. Then pulled the trigger. Her gun fired, she felt the slight punch back and saw the muzzle flare, and she saw the undead as its shoulder whipped back from the impact of the bullet. But there was no sound.

There was no sound at all. Bullets fired from a dozen guns, some of them enhanced with magic, cut into the horde and the two injured Wyverns all without a sound.

The massive winged beasts fell a moment later, the last of the undead humans and orcs taken out.

Sound returned and the two last shots echoed through the museum and the inner courtyard, the last running undead taken out with glowing shots through its chest.

The flare was out, a last few bits of fire remaining in the courtyard and on the mound of bodies they’d added to it tonight.

“Effective,” Lewis said.

Theodor grunted. “Didn’t kill the Wyverns outright. I’ll have to up the payload.”

“Shrapnel,” Logan suggested.

“Too uncontrolled. Could kill some of us instead,” Theodor said. “But yes, I’ll work on it.”

Kate watched the carnage down in the courtyard. Some two dozen undead taken out with a few explosives. Using her Aura for so long had taken up a bunch of her mana but the undead had struggled to find the source of their bullets, running around in confusion as they were ripped apart. She’d been a little worried about all the Union combat teams joining in on the night hunt but now, she was more interested to see what else they’d come up with.

Herself and Logan stayed in the museum safe house for a little while after. Both had gotten a few upgrades. Kate looked through her messages and smiled when she saw that her second support Class had already hit level fifteen, and with that, an evolution.

‘ding’ ‘Requirements met for Class Evolution [Heavy Charger] becomes [Artillery Thrower]’

Pick your target. You have killed at least 10 enemies with a heavy weapon throw. You have thrown your weapon at an enemy 50 meters or farther away from you. You have been thrown at least 5 meters by an enemy attack. You have thrown an enemy at least five meters away.

The Artillery Thrower is well versed in the art of using heavy weapons, and throwing them at their enemies. They are stronger than most yet remain well balanced, with a keen eye on angles and distance. They can spot distant enemy movement at a glance and they know to prepare for extended battles. More nuanced and modern warfare is for the weak, you understand that the solution to most problems is to just throw something increasingly bigger at your enemies. Now go and crush them.

Unique stat: Precision

Would you like to evolve your Class [Heavy Charger] into [Artillery Thrower]?

Kate did find that she liked throwing heavy things at the monsters that faced her. She wasn't entirely sold on the idea of an entire subclass focused on throwing things but if nothing better showed up, she wouldn't complain about this one.

'ding' Requirements met for Class Evolution [Heavy Charger] becomes [Tank Breaker]'

Become unbreakable. You have been hit by enemy strikes at least 500 times. You have been heavily injured at least 10 times. You have fought through pain and injury, killing your enemies whilst barely conscious.

The Tank Breaker is a weighty beast, sporting heavy armor, bones, and muscles. Her defenses are nigh impenetrable, her strength near unmatched. Her movements are slow and measured, every strike devastating. Become a moving rock, a tank in human form, ready to stand amidst your enemies, unbreaking, unyielding, until every last one of your foes lies dead and crushed before you.

Unique stat: Fortitude

Would you like to evolve your Class [Heavy Charger] into [Tank Breaker]?

Kate didn't dislike the defensive aspects but she wasn't too keen on being massively slowed down. Not just for her own sake but for Logan's as well. Defenses didn't much matter if you had barely any mobility. Well, she supposed it did matter but considering there were massive monsters among the undead, Wyverns that could likely still lift her up and drop her, let alone just cover her in acid. How far would those defenses go? She already had really good armor and a few resistances. For now, she liked to be at least somewhat mobile.

It was a toss up between the two options so far.

'ding' Requirements met for Class Evolution [Heavy Charger] becomes [Unyielding Bruiser]'

A tidal wave. You have fought equipped with at least three weapons. You have used heavy strikes to kill large enemies. You have fought through heavy injuries, have prevailed even when heavily

outnumbered, have used every skill and weapon at your disposal, thrown axes and killed with your fists.

As the Unyielding Bruiser, you tear through enemy hordes, unstoppable, ferocious, and unforgiving. You wield all of your tools and weapons with unmatched strength and brutality, the heavier, the better. Your steps are sure, every one of your blows devastating as you move through your enemies with flowing heavy strikes, switching between throws and spins, jumps, fists, and magic with seamless motions, practiced and assured. Step onto the battlefield, and show your worth.

Unique stat: Versatility

Would you like to evolve your Class [Heavy Charger] into [Unyielding Bruiser]?

Pretty much the same as before? Or am I missing something? Suppose it's a bit more open with different weapons but still focused on heavy stuff. She liked the mention of flowing strikes and seamless motions. Far more than the heavy weight of the tank breaker.

But what if I'm giving away a super resilient option?

She had a bit of coffee and thought it over, finally coming to the conclusion that unless she could fully negate all incoming damage or avoid it entirely, she'd prefer something that didn't inhibit her movements, even if it meant she wasn't quite as resilient as she would've been otherwise.

'ding' 'Class change: [Heavy Charger] becomes [Unyielding Bruiser]'

'ding' 'Skills changed by [Unyielding Bruiser]'

Active: Bound Weapon Return – lvl 8

You may bind one heavy weapon to yourself and recall it to your hand. This ability is limited to ten kilometers and the farther away your weapon is, the longer it will need to travel. Higher levels in this skill will increase the ability of your weapon to break through obstacles on its return to you. You may change your weapon binding to another once every three days.

[Bound Weapon Return] becomes [Weapon Recall]

Active: Weapon Recall – lvl 8

You may bind two heavy weapons to yourself and recall them to your hands. This ability is limited to ten kilometers and the farther away your weapons are, the longer they will need to travel. Higher levels in this skill will increase the ability of your weapons to break through obstacles on their return to you. You may change your weapon bindings to other weapons once every three days.

Kate raised her brows. "What?" she said, confusion apparent. *I mean sure, two instead of one.* She wasn't entirely sure what to think about the change. Not because it wasn't useful to have but because of what she thought it implied. She went to read the next change instead of overthinking it.

Active: Weapon Throw – lvl 3

Use 10% of your stamina to enhance the throw of a heavy weapon. Accuracy of all weapon throws is increased by 6.5%.

[Weapon Throw] becomes [Versatile Throw]

Active: Versatile Throw – lvl 3

Use 5% of your stamina to enhance the throw of an object. Accuracy of all throws is increased by 6.5%. Any on hit effects from other skills may be applied on the throw. On hit effects will affect the first enemy struck.

Half as expensive, and no longer limited to just heavy weapons. The on hit effects I'll have to test out but if my blood and sound magics can be applied to throws as well, that would make them quite a bit more powerful.

Active: Brutal Cleave – lvl 1

Use 15% of your stamina to cleave through enemies in front and around you. The arc is limited to 190 degrees.

[Brutal Cleave] becomes [Crushing Storm]

Active: Crushing Storm – lvl 1

Use 20% of your stamina to cleave through enemies in front and around you. The arc is limited to 190 degrees. If you hit at least one enemy with Crushing Storm, a consecutive use of the skill has its cost reduced to 15% of your stamina, then 10%, and finally 5%.

Kate had barely used the skill so far. The first use is even more expensive, but I suppose if I have a crowd of monsters in front of me? Five percent is pretty cheap, will probably get that back through Blood for the Living from a single kill. Which means... I could just keep using it, once I hit that five percent cost. At least if they're consecutive uses, whatever that means exactly. Just my next strike?

The skill mostly just felt like a magically enhanced horizontal cleave. Powerful for sure, but so far, she preferred just using normal strikes enhanced with her Blood and Sound magic. Now, maybe she'd find more use for it.

My leveling speed for this Class was crazy too. Didn't even get to level up this skill before I hit the first evolution, she thought. She wondered if that was a good thing or not. Having untested active skills in her arsenal wasn't helpful in the slightest. In a stressful situation, which all fights were, she would just do what she was familiar with.

Will have to try and train with this stuff a little more maybe. Then at least I'll use it with my berserking abilities active.

Passive: Heavy Weapons Expert – lvl 10

You have learned to better adjust your weight and strength when attacking with heavy weapons, reducing stamina usage by 10% when wielding them.

[Heavy Weapons Expert] becomes [Weapon Anarchy]

Passive: Weapon Anarchy – lvl 10

You have learned to better adjust your weight and strength when attacking with heavy weapons, reducing stamina usage by 10% when wielding them with two hands, and 15% when wielding them with one hand. Two handed benefits apply if heavy weapons are wielded with one hand.

Alright. Yes. My suspicion is proven. This fucking Class wants me to fight with two separate two handed weapons, one in each hand. Kate thought about it for a short moment, slowly nodding to herself. Fair enough. Might give that a shot. Probably more reasonable to just switch them out depending on if an axe or hammer is better.

And I'll probably need an upgrade for my hammer. My strength is advancing steadily and more weight doesn't matter much anyway if I can recall it too.

She touched the hammer head of her trusty enchanted war hammer that'd been her companion for quite a while already. "I might be growing up," she said, patting the weapon sheathed on her belt.

"Losing it?" Logan asked.

"Gaining more, actually," Kate said. "But yeah, sure. In some ways, I guess." She ignored his amused look before he went back into meditation, checking the last skill change from her support Class evolution.

Passive: Heavy Weapons Resonance – lvl 5

Spells and skills enhancing heavy weapons are infused 37.5% faster and last twice as long.

[Heavy Weapons Resonance] becomes [Flowing Weapons Resonance]

Passive: Flowing Weapons Resonance – lvl 5

Spells and skills enhancing weapons are infused 37.5% faster and last twice as long. One enchantment can now apply to two weapons that are being wielded.

Kate grunted in a satisfied manner. *That's a huge incentive to try.*

She glanced to Logan and tried to relax for a little bit herself. They weren't exactly due for another break but there were other teams out there now, and tonight, Kate and Logan had decided to go a bit slower, to make sure they could support where necessary. Slower, of course, in relative terms.