

# Chapter One Hundred Forty-Seven

As one of the loyal servants of the headmistress — a miracle I didn't burst into laughter as I thought that particular nugget — I stood in front of her door obediently, not making any sound, waiting for the exact time of the meeting to arrive.

Like the previous meeting, the door opened on its own in the prearranged meeting time, accurate to the second, revealing the dark stairs adorned with silver runes, inviting me to climb.

The more I learned about her, the more I realized just how inflexible she was. Or maybe sheltered was the better option. Trying to devour the Divine Spark without the interference of the system, evidence showed that she was essentially in self-exile, her attempts to hide her nature limiting the number of people she could honestly communicate.

Even if she had supporters other than Titania, they were clearly not around.

She was strong, there was no doubt about that. I still remembered the scary flow of her mana, enough to make her a dangerous threat even without the addition of the Divine Spark she had under her control, which was a spectacular amount.

However, that great potential was clearly wasted by her inflexibility. The only reason she was able to stick around was the great web of mystery that she drew around herself, but the actions of Zokras, the Crown Princess, and Eternals suggested that even that aura of mystery had been cracking from the perspective of their opponents.

She was so lucky that I suddenly appeared, helping her to sell the impression she had other weapons she had been hiding. Still, that didn't change the fact that she was squandering all her power and knowledge with a politically-inept mind and a horribly direct approach.

Unfortunately, her political astuteness wasn't my only problem.

Unlike the previous times, I enjoyed the metaphorical weight of the darkness settling on my presence, weakening the connection between me and the system. The more my trust toward the system dwindled, the more I appreciated the presence of the wards that could limit its interference without blocking the power it granted.

Too bad those wards required a unique Divine Spark to power them. I didn't know whether only the Darkness Spark could do so, or there were some other Sparks that was a viable solution, but

there was no doubt that the Light Spark — the only other spark I could access at the moment — was a horrible substitute for doing so.

Trying to use the light to create concealment would be like trying to make a fireplace out of tinder, not only useless, but explosively dangerous.

I continued to climb, the chorus getting louder and the silver runes shining brighter with each step. I wasn't impressed with them the first time, and the repeated exposure hardly helped me to develop a sense of awe I lacked.

Luckily, my acting skills once again came to the rescue, adding all the amazement and worship I wasn't feeling to my expression.

The room was once again decorated appropriately, with crystal pillars surrounding the crystal platform, and the headmistress once again dressed in her silver and gold armor, as well as her white robe, her glorious wings on the first display.

I was fortunate that she couldn't read minds. I doubted she would appreciate my fantasies about the alternative ways of using those glorious wings.

[Divine Spark Identified! Please absorb it to continue to support the operations of the System]

The system notification didn't come as a surprise, especially since my last visit already showed that even the wards weren't enough to suppress that aspect of the system.

Nor it was able to suppress the sudden sense of hunger inside of me, forcing me to go forward and devour as much as Spark as I could manage.

This time, it was much easier to notice the foreign nature of that sensation.

I knelt in front of her like a loyal knight, and she put her hand on my head. This time, she didn't bother asking about whether I was ready or not before letting her mana flow into my body, wilder than the last time.

I just grunted my teeth, accepting the flow of her sharp power. This time, I was prepared for the merciless deluge, easily isolating particles of Light Sparks from her mana.

Maybe it was the transformation my body had gone through during the previous time, but despite her mana containing more Spark, it hurt even less, my body getting stronger with each passing second.

Her mana flowed through my fake soul space, but this time, aware of the impact it needed to resist, I had built it much stronger, easily handling the flood of mana, while using the previous diversion trick to steal more Divine Spark.

With her choice to send a stronger flow, her control was even more limited, allowing me to steal more and more of the Divine Spark. Compared to the previous times, it was maybe ten times faster, meaning, if the headmistress maintained the transference process for roughly the same time, I would get ten times more Divine Spark.

And I had no intention of letting the system devour all of it.

My growing distrust was the main reason for such a decision. With my growing distrust towards the system, the last thing I wanted was to transfer all of it to the System, thus abandoning the initiative.

So, I split the Spark I managed to steal into three categories. The first, and the smallest, category, I isolated for the system to devour. About as equal to the previous time, a tenth of the total. Ironically, I didn't even plan the system to devour all of it at once, but fed to in quarters, to better understand the rate of conversion into experience.

Or whether it had any actual link in between in the first place, like I was starting to suspect!

The second piece, about double the size of the one that would be devoured, was safely packed into my fake soul space, converted into her equivalent of a Companion Node, to prove the headmistress her efforts were not in vain.

Her choice to use a much more intense mana flow was certainly a curious decision, the one that needed to be assessed. But regardless of her reasoning, if I didn't show her her strategy was yielding tangible benefits, she might not repeat such an action again.

However, the biggest part of the power I managed to acquire, almost three-quarters of it, was wrapped in several layers of my mana, in complicated wards I had created based on the workings of the Crown Princess' spear, to be absorbed directly into my body.

It was an important step for my search for power, even if the resulting power was much less than the System. Because, despite everything, the system was clearly an external source of power.

I had already discovered a way to block the System from empowering — already tested on a fun way against Oeyne — its hosts, and if I could do that, there was no reason to believe the

Organization couldn't do the same. And I didn't want to go back to being the Mule.

I would rather die.

Luckily, the empowerment of the Divine Spark gave me a more palatable alternative. Unlike the system, distributing its power from a center, it literally infused into every fiber of my physical body.

Yes, it empowered me much less than the System, taking a great more deal of effort to pull successfully, but still, compared to the alternative of utter powerlessness...

A little work was certainly more preferable, even if it was committing the sin of wasting Divine Spark in the process.

Pun intended.

The transfer continued, while I split my attention between trying to suppress the unfamiliar sense in front of me, trying to force me to devour all the Divine Spark I could manage, no doubt forced by the System, and maintaining the balance of the complicated mana structure I was using to steal Divine Spark from the mana flow.

A long while later, she finally stopped with the transfer. Her mana probe followed instantly, checking my soul space to the development of the Light Node, a smile appearing on her face as she checked the effectiveness of her new method, though exhaustion was clear as well.

It was a subtle thing, but it confirmed that, for some reason, she was in a hurry. Because she had chosen to apply a more intense method — one that was riskier for me, and more exhausting for her — despite not knowing for sure that it would work.

Unless there was a need to do so, it was a bad move.

I wondered what was her reason, because, from her perspective, everything should have been going excellently. The Zokras was defeated, and while two towns were destroyed in the process, most of the civilians managed to escape, turning what could be a huge crisis into a casual event.

Which meant, there was yet another thing that was pushing her to hurry up.

I hoped it was something related to the Crown Princess, because otherwise, it would mean we were facing a true crisis.

“Go and wait for me in the office,” she said, trying to sound impervious, but I could hear the exhaustion in her tone, further confirming the importance of the issue she was facing, at least from her perspective.

Important enough to put her extra effort to strengthen me.

“As you wish,” I said as I stood up, though, despite my somber tone, I made sure to replicate the stiff movements of a nobleman in the process, trying to sell her the impression of a royal knight.

She nodded in appreciation, and I left the room, ready for a difficult discussion.

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Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Forty-Eight

My entrance to the headmistress' office was less spectacular than the previous time. One difference was I wasn't sneaking in but asked to be there, but also I didn't come face to face with a thief in the midst of burglarizing some of her most precious documents.

Pity, as unlike the last time, I would have been free to react. And I would have loved the excuse to capture one of the princess' secret agents for some pointed interrogation.

Instead, I sat down on the nearest chair, letting my gaze dance over the documents sprawled on the table, but otherwise not doing anything dubious. The headmistress could arrive any second, and I had no intention of ruining the trust I had earned through my spectacular victory — even said the victory was less impressive than the headmistress might think.

I didn't explain Zokras' latest trick to her, nor did I plan to do so in the future, because it would raise a lot of questions about the limits of my true ability. According to everything I had revealed to her about my abilities, it wasn't something I could achieve.

Zokras' continued survival had no immediate implication worthy of for me to abandon my convenient fake identity.

I turned my gaze on the documents that were sprawled on her desk. None of those had any huge secret. If they had, she wouldn't have left them on her desk carelessly while allowing me to enter without supervision. It was different for the books on the shelves, protected by layers of wards. Nothing I couldn't break, but she might arrive any moment.

More importantly, sometimes, unimportant details told a better story.

Naturally, every single report on her desk was about the recent battle. One of the advantages of high intelligence was to process information faster, so much that processing every single detail represented in the visible pages of the reports took me only a few seconds.

And the results were hardly amazing. Every single report on her desk was misleading.

Dangerously misleading.

Nothing inaccurate at the highest level, of course. It would be easy enough to detect. Anything too high-profile, meaning anything that might be double-checked by the headmistress directly, or might be followed up by a discussion with Titania, was flawless.

Well, mostly flawless. The way the conclusions were written included some interesting word choices, subtly undercutting the importance of the events that happened in the surrounding towns, and overstating the importance of the crisis at the school.

The details were even more inaccurate. I didn't have a full picture of the view, of course, but just comparing the numbers against the actual details I had observed directly while waiting for Titania, the disparity was clear.

The situation was even worse than I was expecting. The spies were not only adjusting the headmistress' orders or interfering indirectly, but actually feeding her garbage information.

And neither Titania, nor the headmistress had the personality to dig through that numbers to discover the subterfuge.

Turning those reports into another subtle, yet deadly wound on Silver Spires.

However, before I could delve deeper into the implications, the door opened, and the cloaked figure entered, though, unlike other times, she didn't bother pulling her hood, her beautiful face out in the open to contrast her black robe.

I recalled with some amusement how intimidated I had been of her when we had first come face to face. A mysterious hideous ghost that managed to control one of the most premier organizations of the world despite all the opposition.

The deeper I saw the supposed premier organization, the faster that fear and reverence dispelled — not helped by knowing the innocent beauty that lied under her scary robe. As I understood the power of the enemy, the veneer of strength Silver Spires was reduced into smokes and mirrors.

And not the kind that could actually trick the enemy, not if their latest moves were any indicator.

The headmistress walked forward with grace, her wings gathered under her robe, looking like a hunch. She didn't give any sign of greeting or other social niceties, just sat on her chair.

However, her robe was unable to hide her exhaustion. Her tense shoulders and trembling arms were evidence enough. She had been affected by the transfer process significantly, and the fact that she wanted to have a meeting despite that was another evidence of the seriousness of the situation.



I waited silently, doing my best to look even more exhausted than her.

Her gaze danced over the room before focusing on me. “Good work against Zokras,” she finally said. “He’s not someone that will be missed.” Her voice was slow, stuttering. Like she was not used to paying compliments, though her lowered hood hardly helped. Without its intimidating shadow, her aura was lacking.

“It was nothing,” I said. “I was just lucky.”

“It was more than luck. You adapted to your power faster than I imagined,” she asked, trying to sound casual, but against me, her interrogation attempt, which was clearly supposed to be subtle, was laughable. It didn’t alarm me, because if she was serious in her fears, she would have asked the questions before going all the effort to transfer a chunk of Divine Spark.

Or maybe not, I realized a second later. Maybe she was actually trying to use the effects of the Light Node to make the interrogation easier.

“Is it faster than normal?” I questioned, trying to sound neutral. After all, I wasn’t supposed to have any kind of baseline.

“A bit,” she answered.

“Is this about the spells I used against Zokras?” I asked. “Because it was mostly about the wards I set up. I only managed that effect after hours of preparation.” It wasn’t true, of course, but she definitely lacked the sources to validate it. Even Titania couldn’t really dig down to my magical tricks.

“Show me,” she ordered as she leaned forward, anticipation showing despite her exhaustion.

I raised my hand and started to draw several runes rapidly, creating a small ward that could use light magic in combination with life energy, for great explosive effect. I didn’t use it against Zokras, but that didn’t mean it wasn’t actually usable. I just didn’t have the time to do so. “It took hours to set the ward up, but the results were spectacular,” I answered.

She nodded after examining the ward for a long while, and from her expression, I could see that she was already convinced by my answer.

“Good work,” she said, suddenly falling silent, like she had something else to say, but failing to come up with a way to do so. The fact that she didn’t give a direct order was telling.

“What’s the problem?” I asked, giving her a chance to open up.

“There’s no problem,” she said, but that the answer came too quickly, and her eyes evaded mine. The exact reaction of a bad liar, trying to deflect. Her reliance on her magical aura and mysterious hood made it difficult for her to face someone near her power, yet not fully loyal to her.

“Sorry if I misspoke,” I said with a regretful expression. “With the undead threat gone, I’m sure there’s no emergency left.”

Her silence was beautiful. I could see her trying to find a preamble after my statement, without swallowing her words. Which was inconvenient when she was facing a threat important enough to hasten the transfer process significantly.

“I should leave you to your tasks, I’m sure you’re busy with a lot of things after a crisis,” I said, standing up like our meeting was already concluded.

“Not yet,” she said as she shook her head, but that didn’t prevent panic from infecting her tone.

She was completely unfit to lead with anyone that was not showing her extreme loyalty or she couldn’t fully dominate with a flex of her magic.

“As you wish, headmistress,” I said as I took my seat once more, not being difficult, at least, not directly.

“There are some mysterious sightings around Mount Dread,” she finally decided to say/

“Oh, that’s quite far away,” I said. “What exactly are we talking about?”

“A dragon,” she said.

I was glad of my acting abilities because inside, I was quite surprised. Not just because I was almost sure about where that dragon came from, but also the headmistress actually asked about her.

It wasn’t too shocking, because as I learned more about the System and its roots, it wasn’t hard to connect dragons weren’t just another group of monsters, their special trait of not giving experience made a lot of sense in the process.

I was interested in the headmistress’ priorities, however, because while the dragon was an interesting target, the fact that she was focusing on that in the middle of a crisis was quite

telling.

It should be too unimportant to the considerations of the headmistress. Unless there was another mystery around it.

“Is it too strong?” I asked, carefully asking a leading question.

“Maybe,” the headmistress answered, and she didn’t seem to be lying. It revealed one important piece of information. She didn’t have a connection with the dragon, at least not enough to know her strength.

Not that I had a true perception about her power level as well. I hadn’t been extremely impressed by her display of power as we escaped the undead base, but might be about the damages she had received in the hands of the necromancers conducting a ritual on her.

“Anything else I should know?” I asked.

“You need to capture the dragon alive, and if possible, without hurting it too much,” she answered.

“It should be done unless it’s too strong,” I said, which earned a soft smile from her, that made her even cuter than her beautiful features already did. “And it’s a priority mission, why?” I countered, choosing to dig into her explanation. It was clear that there was more to it than just capturing a dragon, or she would have just given an order.

Her delay was pointed. I waited for her to answer patiently. “There might be some ...” she murmured before fading.

“Let me take a guess,” I said, reading her hesitation. “There’s some members of our mysterious walking around.”

“Maybe,” she answered, which didn’t surprise me even the slightest.

“And I’m guessing that it’s very important, but for a reason you can’t tell me,” I said, stealing her initiative even further. She nodded. “And you don’t have any reliable information about the number of enemies or their powers,” I followed up, stealing the initiative even further.

“I know it’s a bit difficult,” she said before taking a deep breath.

“Don’t worry, I’ll do it,” I said with a smile even as I stood up. “Do you think they’ll be more interested in killing it, or capturing it?” I asked.

“Killing,” she answered with a nod, which unlocked another interesting set of questions for me, particularly why it was important to capture a dragon alive for the headmistress, but the organization preferred to kill it. Yet undead forces wanted to use her for a mysterious ritual.

But I kept my mouth shut. Playing the role of the obedient subordinate was much more important at the moment.

Especially with her change of attitude.

After confirming that my display of power was not suspicious, her orders were replaced by hesitant requests. I was willing to believe it was about my spectacular performance against Zokras, not only dispelling the threat but also saving her only subordinate — or at least, only one strong enough to matter.

But maybe, it had a different reason.

However, that was a problem for a different time. For now, I needed to find an old acquaintance.

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SKILLS

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Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Forty-Nine

Three hundred miles between Silver Spires and Mount Dread was quite a distance for most people. Luckily, I had long lost the right to be considered in the same category as most people. For me, it was nothing that I couldn't handle in several minutes.

But I didn't rush out immediately, and first visited the Hall of Crafting, to see my favorite blacksmith.

Unfortunately, not have some fun activities — as I lacked time — but ask her help to forge some new weapons. After the teleportation mishap, my arsenal was completely gone.

That plan went astray the moment I entered the hall of crafting, and realized, she wasn't in her room. She was in the main area, working with the other blacksmiths to forge a set of weapons. No doubt emergency orders from the school. I couldn't imagine her working together with the guilds under any other circumstance. Though, that didn't prevent guild members from watching her angrily, jealousy mixing with entitlement.

Understandable, as even when she worked alone while the rest worked in teams, her weapons were clearly superior. And to add insult to injury, she was considerably faster in her production as well.

Pity that meant I couldn't just pull her away. Well, that wasn't entirely true. I could have pulled her away, but that would mean invoking the headmistress' authority.

I wouldn't mind abusing that authority under better circumstances, but with the number of spies that clearly infected the school, it wouldn't nice for Oeyne if these spies realized she had a connection to the headmistress through a mysterious agent.

Things were complicated enough in Silver Spires before stirring the pot pointlessly.

Instead, I sneaked down to use Oeyne's forge room. With all the material accessible, it took me half an hour to forge a new sword, a dagger, half a dozen throwing knives designed to hold mana for my unique fighting style.

Also, most importantly, I crafted a large net, the kind that could capture a large magical creature without hurting it too much.

[-3419 Mana]

Not the highest quality of equipment, not in terms of the materials I had invested, and certainly not in terms of the time and energy I committed to them, but considering the time crunch I was facing, the best I could manage.

With the Eternals were already hunting for the dragon, the sooner I acted, the better. Failing my first mission from the headmistress, even a difficult one, wouldn't go too well in my mission to gain her trust. And her trust was critical, because she was my only source of information about the truth of the System.

And if the worst happened, and my weapons proved insufficient, I could always come back to forge new weapons. The travel took much less time than the crafting required. With the decision made, I summoned another elemental ride.

[-942 Mana]

Riding the air elemental, the distance between the school and my destination melted into nothing in minutes, and soon, I was once again looking at the misty peak of Mount Dread.

That close to a possible Eternal presence, I dispelled my ride. I could have ridden it further, but it was better safe than sorry. The mount was fast, but both visually and magically, it was hardly the sneakiest method to travel. Walking, especially thanks to the constant rolling mists ready to hide my presence, was much easier.

My plan was simple. First, I would arrive at the safe house, reinforcing the wards I had set up there during my previous trip, maybe establishing a couple more wards to enhance the security, before starting a deadly game of tag with the Eternals.

I started walking. However, my plans hit a little, almost minuscule snag...

In the form of a huge, rotating ward that covered the whole mountain without a warning, locking me in the mountain.

The ward was strong, stronger than anything else I had felt in my life. The closest thing for them was the defensive wards of Silver Spires when they were raised in war mode according to the plans, but I wasn't sure which one would win out.

"Not a great start," I murmured even as I pulled my dagger reflexively, but somehow, I managed to keep myself from gathering my mana for an explosive spell.

The reason for it, the shape of the ward.

If I was the target, they wouldn't have surrounded the whole mountain with the ward.

That didn't mean there was no danger. Of course not. Like that was even possible with my luck.

No, it just meant I wasn't under immediate danger.

"What to do?" I murmured to myself even as I forcibly suppressed my mana even below its natural condition. Not the most comfortable feeling, but it prevented my presence to be detected.

One silver lining about the strength of the ward was that I didn't need to actively use my mana to check its nature. As it glowed stronger than the sun to my magical senses, it was easy to understand its main functions without delving into it with my mana.

And while that implied a certain sense of weakness, the reality wasn't that kind. Huge walls of a castle were also something that could be seen from a distance, but that didn't make it any less effective in their job. Not everything needed to be hidden to function properly.

A quick assessment was enough to reach a few important conclusions.

First, the Eternals were clearly responsible, because their magical runes had come from the same tradition as the wards I had sneaked through when I had taken down three of their members.

Unfortunately, the current ward definitely didn't share the shoddy construction of the earlier defenses. Meaning, I was not only facing the Eternals, but also I was facing something stronger than a small, disposable team.

And considering their small, disposable team included two assassins and a mage over level thirty. I was able to take them down easily, but unfortunately, that was less about their battle potential than the excellent ambush I managed to pull while they were in their own base.

Hardly an achievement that could be copied easily.

Second, at least in the short term, for all intents and purposes, the ward was essentially unbreakable. Yes, its strength was comparable to full-powered wards of the school, and I had half a dozen ways to destroy or circumvent those wards.

Unfortunately, the current ward wasn't as simple.

The wards of Silver Spire were like a finely crafted mechanical toy, with many tricky bits



designed to allow passage, maintain the living condition of the students, and otherwise interact with its inhabitants. And that wide range of tasks was the thing that allowed me to find workarounds, allowing me to sneak through them.

Breaking a complicated toy was a simple affair.

This ward was might as well be a sheet of solid steel, designed to do one thing, and only one thing. To isolate an area. There was no trickery against a solid sheet of metal, only brute force.

Third, trying to break out was a horrible choice. Call me paranoid, but there was a small chance that the one responsible for the ward might decide to check it out if they noticed someone trying to break out of the wards. Which, considering my expectations about their powers, was hardly a good feeling.

Not only I was woefully under-equipped — how I regretted not stopping by Aviada's patrol to borrow her sword once more — against any foe, but also I had no idea about the number and composition of the enemy.

My only reasonable guess was that they had more than three members — maybe a few, maybe several — and I expected every member to be over level thirty, with no reasonable guess about the upper limit.

Not exactly the easiest challenge to face. Ironically, not the worst either. At least, unlike my first battle against Zokras, I wasn't ambushed by a superior foe supported by nearly a dozen undead machines of death.

The only positive thing was that my sixth senses weren't tingling the same way I had felt in my last visit, so whatever mysterious being that had been watching me during my last visit had better things to do.

It wasn't hard to think about what might be the distraction.

Seconds later, I felt another ward spreading out, its feelers spreading, forcing me to pull my mana even tighter into my veins. It was a detection ward, validating my earlier decision to dispel my mount.

The detection ward was merciless. If I delayed canceling the mount until the moment I had detected the first ward, the detection ward would have picked the mana remnants.

I wasn't able to analyze the defensive ward, because, unlike the first ward, glowing with all the

confidence of shining steel wall under the sun, it was a subtler ward. I could feel it spreading over the sky, impressive for a detection ward.

It was not impossible to analyze it, to understand its strengths and weaknesses more accurately, but to do that, I needed to stay under some wards of my own, blocking the feelers the detection ward was spreading. Ironically, the detection ward itself prevented me from erecting such a ward in its confines, while its defensive counterpart prevented me from escaping.

Luckily, I had already established a perfectly serviceable hideout, with wards designed to protect me from exactly those kinds of interference.

I started walking toward the hideout, my mind drifting toward the nature of the challenge I was facing.

The only positive thing about those wards was that they were established through some kind of artifact rather than cast directly. Technically, I didn't have any evidence to support that conclusion, other than the power required to erect those wards.

Even in my current strength, setting up a ward to cover up the whole mountain in seconds was impossible to imagine, let alone setting up two of them in quick succession, with no rest in between. Considering the Eternals were supposed to fight against gods and win, I wasn't ready to discount the possibility of them having someone as strong.

But sending someone as strong to such a mission was completely different. If I were to guess, based on not my own progress but the more usual progress I had seen on others, someone definitely needed to be over level hundred to instant-cast such a ward, with a stat growth to actually match their level.

Not exactly someone to send out to errands.

They likely had a c item to cast such wards. It wasn't the happiest conclusion either, showing the depths of their treasure vault, but certainly better than having an opponent that could snuff me with a flicker of their mana.

"Finally," I murmured even as I finally stepped into my safe house, my own wards enough to block the feelers of the detection ward, allowing me to relax the tight hold I had on my own mana, which was always an extremely uncomfortable sensation. Like trying to hold my breath, tense and uncomfortable. Almost like an itch impossible to scratch.

However, despite the temptation to laze around for a moment, I was already setting up a ward

of my own to properly analyze the opponent's defensive preparations. Because one thing was clear.

The opponent set up a deadly trap, one that was suspiciously excessive, almost overkill, to be applied against a dragon that could be restrained by a few measly liches.

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#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Fifty

Under the difficult circumstances I found myself in — again — what I needed more than anything was information. And to do that, in such a large field, with mist thick enough to block anything outside a fifty-foot radius, the only reliable method to do was establishing a detection ward of my own.

A detection ward, under normal circumstances, was not exactly challenging, especially when done from an already secured base. Unfortunately, the situation was far from normal.

Most detection wards worked in the same principle, sending tightly-controlled strings of mana outside to analyze the surroundings and communicating with the main array. Unfortunately, the overwhelmingly-strong detection ward that covered the sky not only could detect anyone not actively suppressing their mana — or hiding behind a set of concealment wards of their own — but also they could detect the subtle mana from the detection wards.

They were ways to prevent that, based on the way the opposing ward was working. Unfortunately, the current ward I was facing was simply too strong, too over-compassing for those tricks to be viable.

Luckily, not all detection wards relied on sending out mana. Some of the more obscure wards worked passively. They weren't used much because their detection capabilities were significantly lower. They were usually placed in distant locations, as some kind of outer detection, and only then, passive structures were used because their mana consumption was much lower. They were also significantly worse in distinguishing the nature of different mana sources.

Luckily, their weaknesses didn't make them completely useless against the circumstances. Not with the potential of the people I was facing against. Especially since I didn't expect them to waste any effort trying to stay concealed.

Why should they, when they had conveniently surrounded the area with an impenetrable ward and a near-omniscient detection ward? These were not exactly the critical setup phase of a stealthy operation.

The moment I established the ward, I was able to detect two sources of mana that were passing dangerously close to my shelter, confirming my guess.

The way they radiated power passively suggested that they were strong, I tensed for a moment,

thinking that my concealment wards were not enough to block their detection capabilities.

Luckily, their route was incidental, and they had disappeared from my detection field after a few seconds. However, that left me another question.

The passive detection ward only covered a minuscule portion of the mountain, barely a sliver, due to its inherent disadvantages — and the constant glow of the defensive ward that surrounded the mountain, blanketing out the detection capabilities of the ward due to the constant magical glow it created, hardly helped.

Immediately detecting two opponents, strong enough to give me significant trouble, was not a good indicator of the number of enemies around. So, either I was unlucky, or there were far more enemies than I had been expecting.

Another flash power appeared from a different direction, tangentially passing my base before disappearing from the range. And then, from another direction, came yet another energy signature, this time two of them.

There were more enemies than I had been expecting.

Much more.

“Fuck it,” I murmured.

I had one day to rest. Just one fucking day, since I had to defend two different cities simultaneously against a coordinated undead attack — and almost killing myself in the process.

There was one positive thing, one little silver lining.

With their incredible investment and the number of warriors they had deployed was completely unnecessary to capture a dragon. The dragon actually being much stronger was not a likely possibility.

That might have explained the reason for the wards they had established, but the weird movement pattern of my opponents didn't make sense from the perspective of people trying to systemically search for one extremely strong target.

No, they had a different reason.

Of course, that raised an important follow-up question, whether the headmistress was aware of that detail and used the situation to send me to a dangerous situation, a remote execution.

Though, a bit of thinking told me that it was unlikely. I had no reason to think the headmistress could track me — if she could, I wouldn't have been able to sneak into her bedroom to peek at her — and my arrival to the mountain was too fast for her to rely on for me to be locked inside.

Not to mention, if she wanted to kill me, she had much more efficient ways of setting up a sure-fire ambush.

Unless I had any solid evidence, I was willing to operate under the assumption that it was my own luck that forced the circumstances. Considering everything that happened, the current circumstances weren't exactly unbelievable.

I needed to act, however. The Eternals were clearly going to move around a lot — whether they were looking for something, or for other purposes — and hiding in one location, hoping to stay undiscovered was not the safest strategy.

Not with my luck.

However, I couldn't just leave my hiding spot, hoping to stay concealed. I needed to find a way to move around without being detected.

Suppressing my mana continuously was not sustainable for hours, not because of the discomfort it would create — and it would be annoying — but because if I faced any danger, I would either have to rely only on my physical combat abilities to handle it, or I would reveal my position.

Not a good solution, since my whole melee fighting abilities were based on strategic discharges of mana to deliver explosive damage. Facing against a strong enemy without that trick was certainly not something I wanted unless I had no other option.

"Maybe an old trick would help," I murmured even as I stretched my mana directly on the ground, carefully creating a tunnel while making sure it was still under the concealment ward.

It took almost a minute for me to hit the glowing defensive ward, but that was not surprising. As much as I would have loved for them to forget covering the bottom of it, it wasn't exactly shocking.

Breaking through the ward was not an option, but luckily, it wasn't the reason I had come here. I was there to check one important thing, that whether the constant glow of the ward interfered only with my own wards, or interfered with their own as well.

And much to my happiness, I discovered that it actually did.

Maybe they didn't even think someone was crazy enough to set their presence so near to their wards. It wouldn't be the first time I abused a clear design mistake of the defensive wards.

"Finally something for my benefit," I thought even as I started creating a complicated web of tunnels — not neglecting to add small explosives, false turns, and many other tricks to make sure those tunnels wouldn't be tracked easily if they were discovered. However, unlike the last time I had pulled that trick in the undead base, I didn't cover every inch of the tunnel with explosive runes.

This time, it was about staying hidden and hiding my retreat, not leaving a destructive gift while I retreated.

Tactics needed to adapt when total retreat was not an option.

Of course, I wasn't just establishing those tunnels to escape. No, I was adding some passive detection wards, spread about a couple hundred feet away from each other, giving me a better view of what was going on. The radiating presence of the surrounding ward reduced their effectiveness, but luckily, not completely prevent it.

Unfortunately, a more complete view didn't immediately solve my problem, for one important reason.

The more I could detect, the more confused I got.

First, closer to the peak of the mountain, there were more enemies running around — and flying around — to a point that I had to update my estimations upward. Several dozen enemies were a certainty, and maybe there were even in low hundreds.

Hundreds of level-thirty and above combatants were not something that was easy to handle.

The second confusing thing, was that they were fighting against each other, sometimes suddenly starting to fight after traveling together for a while, for no direct apparent reason or rhyme. Though whenever they started fighting, it started with a weird flare of magic from at least one of the parties.

However, the most interesting thing was the total lack of skill they were displaying. Of course, it was hard to assess such a thing accurately from the limited perspective of a passive detection ward, but every single spell they used was simple, almost as bad as my first casting attempts. Pure telekinetic power waves, fireballs, and flying pieces of rocks.



The only thing that separated them was the huge power they were putting behind the spells, turning every attempt into a deadly danger regardless of the lack of skill in its nature.

How interesting, I murmured. I was about to retreat back into my own hiding spot, when I felt another flare of magic on the edge of my recently-expanded field of detection. I was about to ignore it, as it was yet another incompetent flare of magic, but it was immediately followed by a familiar type of spell.

A familiar spell that a situational ally had used before in my presence.

An ally with a certain scaly skin condition.

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[Level: 31 Experience: 493210 / 496000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6324 / 6324 Mana: 5902 / 7750 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Fifty-One

The magical presence of my target was nearby.

Unfortunately, my preferred method of flying mount was not an option. Not with the detection ward ready to catch the moment I stepped out of the little web of protection I had created under the shadow of its defensive counterpart.

So, I continued to move the slow way. Creating a complicated set of tunnels. And even worse, I had to create some of them much larger, just in case I had an opportunity to save my scaly acquaintance.

Saving her was a target despite the potential risks, because the headmistress needed me to capture the dragon. However, my motive was not fulfilling her order, or even selling the illusion of a loyal soldier.

No, I wanted to save the dragon — if I could do so without putting myself under certain danger — because the headmistress' request implied that the dragon was important for her. Which meant, the dragon either had some kind of link with Divine Spark, she had some information valuable for the headmistress.

Or she had a completely different significance, which might make her even more important.

Regardless, she was important for me, because her presence promised leverage that could be used against the headmistress.

The nearer I got, the more accurately I could detect the details.

As far as I could tell, there were eight distinct sources of energy, which would have been enough for me to turn back and retreat, leaving my scaly acquaintance to whatever unfortunate fate that awaited in the hands of a mysterious organization responsible for the ongoing disaster that was slowly destroying the civilization.

Luckily for her, I could also detect their formation and the current targets as well. And that told me one important thing. The battle wasn't a siege where seven members of the Eternals assaulted the dragon, trying to take her down.

If that had been the case, from the level of power I could detect, she wouldn't have lasted even a minute.

No, even from a distance, I could feel four parties spread around, each fighting against each other. The first party was, naturally, the dragon herself. She was away from every other opponent, several wards surrounding her in a desperate attempt to create a defensive bulwark, one that was being eroded aggressively.

The intricacies of the wards would be enough to prove that she was more than a mere beast even if I hadn't communicated with her before.

However, intelligence was not sufficient alone when being sieged by several high-leveled enemies, even when those enemies were lacking in skill. Power was also needed, an asset that she was clearly lacking.

She wasn't weak by any sane definition of the word. She was still strong enough to take down Cornelia, or one of the death knights of Zokras, in less than a minute — though I would pick Titania for a victory with a comfortable margin.

Unfortunately for her, that level of power was hardly enough under the circumstances. She was only holding on because of external factors. The relative lack of skill of her attackers didn't match their incredible power. And the enmity among themselves.

Her attackers were split into three factions, though these factions were not equal in number, or in power. The biggest group consisted of four members, three mages and a warrior. They were at the center of the group, their main focus on attacking the dragon. Even with their unskilled approach, they would have taken the dragon down with relative ease.

However, the second group was actively trying to prevent them from succeeding.

The second group consisted only of two members, one mage and one warrior, likely with a ranged specialization. They were staying quite a bit distance away from the first group as they did their best to interfere with the first group's attacks against the dragon. However, they were distant enough that, if the first group decided to attack them, they would be able to retreat. A simple plan, but effective.

That didn't mean they were on the side of the dragon, because they were also attacking the dragon whenever the dragon had an opportunity to sneak away.

Clearly, they shared the same objective, but they were fighting for the honor of taking the spoils.

However, the real interesting thing was the fourth party. It was a lone warrior, yet he was

attacking all three at the same time, without any rhyme or reason, completely berserk. I might have mistaken him for a monster in the middle of a blood rage if it wasn't for his distinct signature marking him as completely human.

Just mindlessly berserk.

How very much interesting, I thought even as I continued my laborious journey.

If there was one good thing about a chaotic four-way magical skirmish, the spells that were being thrown around with reckless abandon were the exact thing I needed to conceal my own magical signature, essentially hiding under the shadows of their spells to quicken the tunnel-creation process.

And it was a good advantage, under the assault of two groups — even with them restraining each other — the dragon was getting closer to defeat. Layer after layer, her wards were getting destroyed, with her speed to recreate unable to match the speed.

I started tunneling even faster.

[-231 Mana]

When I was finally able to poke my head, about a hundred feet away from the defensive cave the dragon had picked for her desperate last stand, only one detail about the battle surprised me, though not a big one.

The members of Eternals were wearing three different types of uniforms, though each had the symbol of a silver ankh on their chest, only the color of their shirt different. The small group of two was wearing a green shirt, while the large group had two different colors, three of them wearing black and one wearing blue. Interestingly, the one that was currently raging was also wearing a blue.

Maybe the Eternals weren't as unified as I thought. Of course, that was the best case, as there might be many different reasons for that difference in color, like operative teams, maybe even simple fashion preference.

I stayed concealed, watching carefully for an opportunity. I wanted to save the dragon, but not at the cost of revealing myself.

I cared about getting leverage over the headmistress, but not at the cost of directly opposing a literal army of high-levelled combatants.

Luckily, that didn't mean I was completely helpless. For example, when one of the mages dressed in black threw a huge fireball strong enough to destroy her remaining wards, I sent a concealed string of mana to destabilize it, making it explode before it even reached the halfway mark between them and the dragon, making them receive the bulk of the attack.

Admittedly, it hadn't been a particularly difficult job. Not when it was already getting more and more unstable as it flew toward the dragon due to excessive mana the caster pumped in its structure. And that was another indicator of their lack of experience, failing to cast even such a simple spell correctly, despite from a pure potential perspective, being able to put more raw power than Cornelia could display.

The spell exploded close to them. Unfortunately, they had their own protections — crude, but with enough power behind them to make them formidable — making the fireball barely an inconvenience for them.

It might have been different if the smaller group had been able to take advantage of the mistake, but they were equally clumsy, choosing to send a huge chunk of ice bolt after charging it fully rather than relying on a quick attack to leverage the opportunity.

They were not only incompetent in terms of using magic, but also they were tactically unaware.

As I watched them, the berserk warrior finally started to show the signs of mana depletion, and the next time he attacked the group of four — he had been bouncing between all three targets repeatedly — the group of four turned their attention to him, killing him quickly.

Interestingly, none of them showed the slightest hint of hesitance, including the one that was wearing the same color uniform.

However, even when they were killing a mindless and weakened opponent, their movements were lacking. Both in terms of spell selection and coordination, to a point that their spells interfered with each other significantly.

With that lack of skill on display, I was confident in taking all of them in a few minutes.

Unfortunately, it was clear that those strong but unskilled mages were not my only opponents. Not even close. The amount of skill they were displaying was too limited to establish the wards around us, not even if they had miraculous artifacts to help them.

Which meant that there were others with more respectable skill levels — like the ones I faced back in the city where they were targeting Titania, or even more skilled — responsible for

managing the wards.

And even that wasn't even the full extent of the challenge I was facing.

With my luck, there was always more.

Barely a minute after the berserk warrior had fallen, another complication joined the mix. A group of three just entered the range of my detection, moving with a great speed, uncaring of the magical expense. They were coming from the direction of the smaller group.

At the same time, the smaller group changed their behavior significantly, and stopped targeting the dragon, focusing their attack on the group of four, even slowly closing in the distance.

Another significant tactical mistake, which told me that not only they were not used to using strong magic, but also, they didn't have much tactical awareness.

They might as well just cry reinforcements.

Even the group of four, despite their limited tactical acumen, realized that. Their reaction, however, was interesting. Rather than trying to retreat, they intensified their assault on the dragon.

For some reason, they were trying to take down the dragon before the reinforcements arrived. Maybe they trusted themselves to defend against the five with the dragon taken down, or maybe they had another aim.

Regardless, with the inclusion of more reinforcements, I was ready to cancel my plans. Information was something precious.

My life was more precious.

However, before I could retreat back to the tunnel, another interesting development made me reconsider my plans. One of the four, the warrior wearing black, let out an explosive cry, and he started to act in the same mindless berserk manner.

A second later, he was attacking his previous allies in reckless abandon.

A crazed warrior loose between three mages in arms reach, a recipe for disaster in any measure.

Also, just the opportunity I needed.

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[Level: 31 Experience: 493210 / 496000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6324 / 6324 Mana: 6192 / 7750 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation



## COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Fifty-Two

I was curious about the sudden and unbidden transformation in one of my opponents. It wasn't the first time I noticed that transformation, but the other times, I was only able to observe it through the passive detection ward, making me miss the details.

It was the first time I watched the process directly, not that it made the mystery any easier to solve.

There were no spells targeting him, no great trap, nothing. One moment, he was fighting together with his allies. A second later, they lost all reason to the point of targeting allies and enemies without rhyme and reason, with no sense of self-preservation to limit them. And it wasn't just an alignment shift. They were literally fighting on reflex, with no actual objective.

However, with reinforcements on their way, I didn't have a lot of time to waste, certainly not enough for experimentation.

I needed to save my damsel, and escape.

The incompetence of my enemies came useful at that moment, especially when three unskilled mages were pushing as much mana they could to their spells in a desperate attempt to put some distance between themselves and a berserk warrior.

Unfortunately, with their lack of skill, they might as well try to use clouds as a shield.

Then, something even worse happened. Their spells entangled, about to create a dangerous commotion that would likely kill all of them.

They should really thank me, I thought even as I stretched my mana and took control of their spell — conveniently, their combined mess of a spell going chaotic was an excellent way of hiding from the omnipresent detection ward. Barely for a few seconds.

That was all I needed.

First, I melded my mana and reached for the chaotic spell that was about to explode. Trying to steal control of an opponent's spell was as dangerous as trying to grab the sword of a charging warrior. Luckily, it was considerably easier if the charging warrior was a three-year-old and barely able to lift the sword itself.

I didn't suppress the spell, or make it even more destructive. I shaped its direction, targeting the

dragon, and in the process, saving the lives of the three unfortunate guys trying to deal with the betrayal of their ally.

My aim wasn't to kill the dragon, of course. The moment the spell hit against her already-damaged wards, threatening to demolish them completely. And my scaly acquaintance had no chance but put her full focus on maintaining the wards, even as the raging fires covered the full range of her defensive wards, scorching the mist completely.

And conveniently, blocking both magical and visual detection.

Focused on her task, the dragon didn't notice the net flying toward her until it wrapped around her completely and turned her into an unlucky critter.

A shocked roar escaped her mouth, but that was all she could have done with the net suppressing her mana. Exhausted with her desperate defense, it was much easier than I expected.

Of course, that wasn't the extent of my tricks. I pressed my hand on a large piece of rock, and rapidly transformed it into a facsimile of a dragon that had been just burned under a deadly inferno, even using Biomancy to create some fake scales, burnt flesh, and cracked bones on the surface.

[-2352 Mana]

It wasn't my best work. Not only materials were missing, but I only had a second to create a work of art - a macabre one. Still, it looked convincing enough to pass ordinary muster, with people distracted in their little game, and their out-of-control spell still hiding my presence.

Just as one lasting touch, I destabilized the defensive wards remaining in the area, the resulting explosion mixing into the blast of the chaotic inferno.

Then, I rushed back into the tunnel, triggering the runes I had inscribed along to collapse the tunnel and erase my path, dragging the huge net, along with my prey.

I was prepared to attack the dragon — non-lethally, enough to make her fall into her consciousness, just to make sure she didn't make a commotion to destroy my attempts at hiding. Luckily, she turned out to be smart enough not to react when she had been saved from immediate mortal danger.

When I finally stopped at a hiding spot nearer the protective ward, supposed to work as a

defensive structure, the dragon looked at me calmly, silent, even her breathing even.

“Long time no see,” I said with a smirk. Not a lot of time had passed since our last meeting, but it certainly had been a busy period, at least for me. And if the number of missing and damaged scales on her otherwise shiny emerald body was any indicator, it hadn’t exactly been a holiday for her.

She looked at me expectantly. Seeing she wasn’t about to lash out, I loosened the net around her and let her go.

Her wings opened and she took a threatening stance, like she was about to lash out. But her magic stayed calm. It was a smart move, she was posturing in a way that leveraged her physically-intimidating qualities perfectly, but without being overtly threatening.

She was trying to equalize the playing field.

Too bad she was trying to play the game of posturing against an expert.

I was the king of posturing.

I just smiled and sat down, a chair that might even be classified as a throne rose from the ground and met halfway. Another exaggerated move, telling her that I understood her move, but was not particularly impressed.

A dragon ducking her head shyly, realizing her trick had been seen through in a second, was an amusing sight.

“We can posture some more, or I can heal you while you tell me what’s happening here. Which one do you prefer?” I asked.

The way her threatening posture disappeared even as she stretched her front claw toward me was my answer.

I placed my hand on her scales, and sent a rush of healing energy into her body, healing the surface wounds, and even purging some leftover necrotic energy from the previous ritual in the process.

[-1032 Mana]

However, the healing only cured a portion of her wounds. She was in an even worse condition than I had expected.

Of course, even that surface-level healing wasn't entirely altruistic. I was also using the opportunity to examine her soul space, or more accurately, where her soul space was supposed to be.

There was no soul space. Though, after the lengthy history lesson from the headmistress — along with the detailed assessment I had managed to give her during the transfer process — the lack of it wasn't a shock.

For a moment, she was immobile, uncertain what to do. A metaphorical clock ticked in the corner, while the small cave I had carved with my magic was illuminated soft light of the glowing lights of the wall, shining beautifully on her emerald scales.

And since she seemed unwilling to start her story, I actually conjured a clock, ticking very pointedly.

The sigh of a dragon was an impressive show. But her apparent distaste didn't stop her from explaining. Not by speaking, but once again by drawing glowing letters in the air with her claw, using the same ancient language she had used in our previous encounter.

Interestingly, she had no problem understanding my modern speech.

'I was minding my business when suddenly, the Knights of the Eternal Vigil appeared, warding the whole mountain, locking me inside, before they opened many cages, filled with monsters,' she wrote.

I just nodded, gesturing for her to continue like I was aware of that particular fact, barely holding back myself from calling her an idiot.

The fact that she was able to detect the cages meant that she was using magic even after the detection ward was established, because otherwise, with the domineeringly-thick mist of Mount Doom, directly seeing them was not an option.

However, it was interesting that she had mentioned the Eternals with their full, correct name, casually like they were already a known factor. However, the implications of her history knowledge weren't as important as their immediate urgency.

"Do you have any idea why they are dropping those animals?" I asked even as I sent another wave of healing energies into her body. It helped to use the time more efficiently.

[-213 Mana]

And if the healing energy was making her warm and comfortable, and more likely to slip something carelessly before she could realize, well, it must be a complete coincidence.

'Maybe training,' she wrote. 'They were definitely not as strong as they were supposed to be. Maybe this is the way they train their new members.'

Another statement, that if honest, implied more about her lack of relative knowledge about the System in general. They certainly didn't need to make such a huge commotion to train their new members, not when a few weeks of practice would teach them all they needed to know.

However, the sudden berserk state they seemed to be suffering was a more interesting aspect. I remembered the soul spaces of the three I had ambushed back in the town Titania was defending. In particular, the jagged, damaged state of their soul space, with skills and achievements pushed almost in a haphazard manner.

Clearly, like me, they had a way of helping people to push through their level limit and level up at the same time. Considering the number of people that were flying on the surface, they clearly had a higher capacity in creating artificial high-leveled warriors.

Unlike mine, however, their approach clearly had some disadvantages. Maybe one of these side effects was a mindless berserk rage.

And if that was the case, it made sense for the Eternals to lock all of them in a huge ward, with a constant detection ward to monitor their movement just to make sure they didn't leave behind a berserk warrior once they departed.

While I had dismissed their combative capability, it was only in comparison to my capabilities. It didn't change the fact if let out, those men would turn into natural disasters, destroying towns and cities on their way, cutting their defenses like butter.

I didn't bother explaining my chain of thought to my scaly friend, of course. "Probably training," I said dismissively.

'After that, I tried to run away and hide, but before I could create a hideout, they managed to use their ward to find my exact location an hour later, and started sieging me.'

I nodded even as I continued to heal her, my mind on how to handle the situation.

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#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]



# Chapter One Hundred Fifty-Three

However, how to progress to the next step depended on the fate of the battle on the surface.

I turned my attention to the detection wards even as I continued to heal her, trying to understand the changes. The battle was still ongoing, but with a lower intensity.

The group of three tried to retreat, the group of five followed after them, and the berserk one split his attention between the two groups. With that, they moved away, leaving the fake body on the ground without even bothering to check closer, taking its fate as given.

Interesting development after putting all that effort to defeat her.

With them drifting away, but the immediate danger was gone. But I didn't hurry up to share that nugget with my guest.

"Well, it had been a good talk, but they discovered the tunnel and coming down. And I'm exhausted healing you. I should be going. Best luck to you," I said as I stood up, even taking a step toward the tunnel.

The tunnel was too small to contain her. I wanted to see what she would do under the risk of being left to her devices.

'Wait!' she wrote. 'Are you going to abandon me?'

"I don't want to," I said, stretching my acting capabilities to the limit to actually look sad. "However, healing you exhausted me. And you can't exactly follow me through the tunnel, can you," I added, pointing at the tunnel that was barely enough large enough for her head.

'Still, you can't!' she wrote.

"I don't want to, but after all that healing, I'm hardly at a point of joining another battle," I said, having no problem misleading her about my mana capacity. "Too bad you're too big to follow me," I said.

There was a point to the dilemma I was forcing her. The way she had explained her own situation, carefully skirting over the reason for her presence, both in terms of her capture by the undead, and her objectives in the Mount Dread, was enough to show that she had a good idea about the value of information.

I was trying to goad her into offering something valuable, enough to 'convince' me to rework the tunnels, enough to allow her to pass. I could have directly blackmailed her for it, of course, but that would set a tone I wanted to avoid.

She didn't say anything for a moment, before gesturing me to stop, her posture determined. I expected her to offer a bargain. 'Turn your back, and don't look,' she said instead.

I followed her order, and turned my back, my eyes closed. Amusingly, she thought that it would actually prevent me from watching her in a room covered with my own runes.

With my back turned to the dragon, I stretched my magic to see what was going on behind me. Partially because, even after saving her life twice, I didn't trust her enough to ignore the flare of magic that was going behind me.

Although, that wasn't the full explanation. There were many ways of detecting the nature of magic that was going behind me. Direct visual confirmation was hardly required.

My instincts — the same instincts that were telling me that the dragon was female despite having no real reason to think so — poked me to watch it to catch a show.

I watched as her magic covered her skin, turning her into a glowing silhouette of a dragon, before she started shrinking. It was not a spell I recognized. I forced my examination ability, trying to get a feel for the mana pattern, trying to understand what was the spell she was using.

It was certainly not elemental, and despite the glow it created, it wasn't light magic. Despite the way her body shrinking with great speed, it wasn't a Biomancy spell either. Not even close. I stretched my mana, letting it touch the glowing aftermath, trying to get a better feel.

Only to realize it wasn't a spell at all. It was hard to explain as I didn't fully understand what was going on. The closest I could categorize was a healing spell, and that was only because of the effect, rather than the working principles. She was using the unaltered nature of her magic to pull her real form.

Weirdly, that didn't make her dragon form any less real. The simplest analogy was like flipping a coin. The faces were different, but it was still the same object.

However, I abandoned that trail of thought when the glow abated, and revealed her other form. A regal beauty that would have fit perfectly in any noble event if it wasn't for her bright, emerald green hair. Her eyes matched the same emerald tone. Not her irises, but all of her eyes, glowing with an emerald glow, giving her an exotic aura.

And her nakedness, revealing a short yet deliciously curvy frame. Her hips were wide, almost to the point of being termed excessive if it wasn't for their glorious perfection, enough to reveal her extraordinary origins. Unfortunately, the treasure between those hips was hidden due to the way she had positioned her legs.

I could have changed the vantage point of my magical observation, but I let it slide. It was good to have mysteries. Instead, I let my attention wander upward, her smooth and inviting stomach at first, followed by equally huge breasts that dangled on the edge of being too big on her small frame, yet somehow, looked deliciously sexy instead.

Unfortunately, that nakedness didn't last long, as she easily conjured a spectacular dress to cover her nakedness. However, the dress wasn't the first thing she conjured.

She first conjured a pair of elegant shoes, ones with excessive heels, adding almost four inches to her height before she conjured her dress.

She said something which I failed to understand. "You have to use my language," I said. "I have learned that language from the book, and unfortunately, they don't come with a pronunciation guide."

The way she sighed somewhat reminded me of Cornelia, dismissive of anything she saw under her rightful prestige. "You can turn again," she said, her accent noticeable enough to echo her previous words.

I did so, only to meet with her expression shifting expression, a smugness that expected a big reaction from me — though the ease I could read her expression was interesting. It meant that not only she shared the classical human mannerisms in this form, but also she had little experience in controlling them.

I decided to tease her a bit, and the great care she had put in conjuring these elevated shoes before she even conjured a dress for herself gave me the perfect excuse to do so. "You're a bit short for a dragon, aren't you?"

And just like that, her smug expression shattered, replaced by pure fury. "How dare you!" she exclaimed, magic already gathering in her hand.

"You know the wards that preventing their detection has a limit, right?" I said with a dismissive tone, like I didn't even care about her growing attack. It was deliberate, and not just to see her cute expression. If she couldn't control her anger in such a situation, it meant that I needed to handle her more like a hostage than a partner of opportunity.

Luckily, she seemed to have some self-preservation, as her magic dispelled quickly, replacing itself with an angry stamping of her foot instead, which hardly made me take her more seriously. “Don’t call me short!” she threatened, her tone carrying the echo of a growl.

“As you wish,” I said as I took several steps forward, until I stood in front of her. She tensed, expecting an attack. Instead, I put my hand on my shoulder, before dragging it toward her, showing that she was not able to reach my shoulder despite her shoes. “I beg your pardon, your dragoness, you’re definitely taller than me.”

Her furious shriek was amusing enough to compensate for the sudden punch I received in my stomach, throwing me back several feet — though mostly because I didn’t bother to resist.

[-46 HP]

I received the blow to test her further. And despite the pain it created, I could see that she actually held herself back and didn’t hit as hard as she could manage.

“You pack quite a punch for such a ... tall person,” I said, with no intention of relenting. This time, it was purely to tease her, with no intention of assessing her. She didn’t answer, but the way she bit her lips as she raised her hand suggested that I might have pushed her as much as I could manage before she exploded completely. “We need to move, before our friends arrive,” I said.

“Do you expect me to crawl away like a rat just because of some rabble?” she said as she looked at the tunnel in distaste. But before I could point out that she was free to stay here and wait for the arrival of the enemy, she was already walking toward the tunnel.

Clearly, her pride wasn’t important enough to risk her survival. Not that I was surprised by it, as she had been against using the tunnels, she wouldn’t have transformed to her human form in the first place.

I shrugged. “Of course not, you’re a great, prideful dragon. The last thing I expect you to escape.” I smirked. “Feel free to stay and deal with that rabble,” I said with a widening smirk.

Her frustrated expression was simply beautiful.

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[Level: 31 Experience: 493210 / 496000]

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6226 / 6324 Mana: 6831 / 7750 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Fifty-Four

“Maybe I shouldn’t be too critical,” she murmured, unable to hide her frustration. “After all, even for ... someone ... like you, you have worked hard.”

I was amused by her sense of entitlement, assuming herself to be my clear superior even after I had saved her life twice. “As you wish, your dragoness,” I said as I gestured the tunnel. “Please, ladies first.”

But before she stepped in, she gave me a suspicious look. “Shouldn’t you go first, you’re the one that knows the route.”

“If you can handle dismantling the tunnels without alerting the enemy as we move forward, making sure our enemies don’t catch us, all without actually triggering the traps I had embedded, I can go first,” I said with a smirk.

She clearly didn’t appreciate my glib answer. Frustration danced over her face for a few seconds, making me wonder whether I was pushing her a bit too much. But when I looked up worriedly — a fake worry, of course, as the opponents had long gone away, tricked by the little scene I had created — she decided that little digs or the sequence of the walk were not that important.

She started walking down the tunnel, and I followed, stretching my mana to slowly and carefully destroy the tunnels, making sure that not only I didn’t let out a flare of mana, but also making sure that if someone noticed the fake nature of my gift and tried to dig down, they wouldn’t be able to trace the path correctly.

Of course, I didn’t destroy every tunnel with the same skill, as if someone had already arrived down here, searching for a clue about our destination. I made sure to destroy the tunnels that were pointing away with much less care — or a different kind of care — so that if they had actually arrived at this point, them following a fake path would give us the time to retreat.

It was a boring, tedious task.

Luckily, I had the perfect view to give me some enjoyment. The deliciously thick hips of my new companion were dancing back and forth with each step thanks to the ridiculously high-heeled shoes she was wearing. And while she was short, her curves were just delicious enough to compensate for it.

And the rough floor wasn't helping any, making her stumble occasionally. She didn't fall down, of course, not with her supernatural agility, but the occasional stumble was impossible to avoid. Still, that hardly helped my enjoyment of the show.

"What a shoddy tunnel," she murmured.

"Sorry, your dragoness," I said with exaggerated seriousness. "The next time, I'll try to find some high-class marble to dig through."

"Don't call me that," she said, turning just enough to give me a stink eye.

"Well, I don't have your name yet, your dragoness."

"And you won't have it if you act like this!"

"As you wish, your tall and imposing majesty," I answered, even though I received another punch in response.

[-52 HP]

She let it slide with one punch, falling silent as she walked, while I smirked, happy with the short discussion. Her responses gave me a lot of clues about her background, and the levers I could push.

It would be nice to talk to someone other than the headmistress about the Eternals, especially since the dragon didn't hold any power on my only base, unlike the headmistress, who hold the power in my only power base.

She might be a dragon, but clearly, she was also some kind of noble, at least in terms of societal expectations, which guaranteed at least some kind of accuracy in terms of the information she might have. And despite that, her immature reactions were far too emotional for her to be any kind of dedicated agent, making her weak to subterfuge.

The skill she had shown against the combined assault of the Eternals was significant, of course, especially considering she lacked the extremely efficient shortcut provided by the system. However, her skill didn't have any implications in terms of her social status, especially since I had no idea about their power balance.

Apart from her magical skills, the ease she transformed, and the quickness she had changed into her dress and her shoes, implied that it wasn't a rare affair for her to use this form on



social occasions, which had an interesting number of implications.

However, I didn't waste too much time in the land of assumptions. Instead, I turned my attention to the results from the detection wards, observing the battle on the surface, which was going on with occasional frequency, people battling against each other, people fighting against beasts, even the occasional beasts fighting against other beasts...

"So, how are you finding your accommodations in our nice neighborhood?" I asked even as I pulled down another segment of the tunnel, timing it perfectly with a stumble, optimizing her frustration.

"It's the worst place I could ever imagine. Just a little accident, and I'm away from home, in a land filled with upstart barbarians who think themselves strong just because they could kill a few monsters, captured by a bunch of disgusting skeletons with delusions of grandeur, who dares to defile the bones of my ancestors. Then, I get away, and a few days later, I find myself in some kind of training deathmatch, hunted by those incompetent abominations."

She turned to face me. "Yes, I'm loving my new home."

"Sorry to hear that," I said, shaking my head, trying to hide my surprise. If I was reading her answer correctly, she came from a long way away, and if the dismissive tone she was taking toward killing a monster to get stronger, maybe far enough that the system didn't affect her.

Which meant, she came from the lands that were still ruled by the gods.

Without the power of the System, the only thing I had was the scraps of the Divine Spark I managed to steal from the headmistress. I doubted that was enough for a trip. That fact alone was enough to mark her as a valuable source of information.

It was easy to fall into the illusion of whatever was happening in the distant lands was unimportant, that the only thing that was important was what was happening under the control of the system.

An illusion that the training adventure I had accidentally stumbled upon destroyed completely.

I had no idea how many people would be pulled out as a consequence of the training session, but unless it was as low as one or two in a hundred, the Eternals, as an organization, was clearly stronger than I was expecting.

And with the way they designed the event, I would expect at least one in ten to survive, maybe

even going as far as one in two if my estimation was correct. And moreover, the cost of raising them was likely not that high, otherwise, they wouldn't be taking the risk of possible candidates dying.

To be able to treat the death of several level-thirty combatants as an acceptable casualty, they had to be strong. Really strong.

Of course, that forced me to revise several critical assumptions in terms of their involvement. At first, the support they had provided to the undead army and the rivals of the Crown Princess in terms of Mana Gems, rather than getting directly involved. I had assumed that it was because of a lack of power.

But all they needed to do was to deploy these wards around Silver Spires and conduct their test around the school to destroy the school-like aftermath.

I might have assumed that I had read their involvement wrong, but the presence of three assassins sent to capture Titania invalidated that track prematurely as well. If they had no care about it, they wouldn't have three warriors ready to capture Titania.

That still left one likely option. They clearly preferred not to interfere with the activities of the Empire for some reason — though, considering the slow collapse the Empire was suffering, it was definitely a questionable call.

However, it was also clear that some of them believed otherwise, intervening to help Zokras, the princes, even sending some agents to kidnap Titania.

Interestingly, that assumption also explained the sudden absence of a follow-up after they lost their three agents. The Eternals were clearly not an organization to be scared of that loss, but if a smaller faction of them was responsible for those activities, it made sense of them not sending a follow-up.

They clearly had a limited number of agents, at least the kind they could use for illegal missions.

However, I wasn't able to think a lot about that, because we finally arrived at my shelter.

We had a lot to talk about.

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[Level: 31 Experience: 493210 / 496000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6226 / 6324 Mana: 6831 / 7750 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Fifty-Five

“Let me go first, to make sure wards are working properly,” I said, even though I was able to feel the wards working perfectly. I wanted to prepare the room for someone in her ‘noble’ stature.

Her identity as a dragon clearly didn’t prevent her from enjoying luxury, and greeting her with something better than dirt floors might be the better idea. Luckily, the wards around my hideout allowed me to cast much stronger spells in the process, allowing me to make some radical home improvement at the cost of some mana.

[-1821 Mana]

Earth Elemental magic, combined with my craft skill, allowed me to work with surprising elegance, though my precision Stat certainly helped quite a bit as well. All that needed to decide was to pick the material.

After some consideration, I decided to go with a combination of marble and crystal. A part of that decision was the ease I could create those materials through elemental spells, but the other part was the way the headmistress’ room was designed.

Since she was also coming from a long way away, I hoped that the fashion was at least somewhat similar. It was a long stretch, of course, but at least it was decent a choice.

For the floor and walls, I picked simple white marble, though I made sure to put several scenes of battle and other pictures etched, copied from some of the older books I had found in the library, hoping that they would be familiar to her. Several candle-holders stretched out of the wall, but instead of having actual candles, they had simple flames, connected to nothing, floating freely.

For the ceiling, I used more crystal than marble, with lights hidden behind half-transparent crystal layers to create a subtle yet intricate light show while also keeping the room warm.

For the furniture, I relied exclusively on the crystal, keeping its general structure and the texture to the crystal platform the headmistress had in her room. And as a final trick, I created a nice pool at one corner, filling it with warm, bubbling water.

And as a final touch, I added the trick I had used after the battle against Zokras, and enchanted the water with healing energies and mana, some of it slowly vaporizing to fill the room,

creating a gentle, comforting atmosphere.

I paid the room one last glance, making sure it didn't resemble a battlefield safe house in any form, and satisfied with the result. It was a miracle, especially with less than a minute spent. Only then, I opened the door again, and inviting my guest in.

"This way, your dragoness," I said, giving a perfect butler bow. It was supposed to be a sarcastic bow, but the nod I received in response as she walked in, letting her gaze wander on the decorations seemed more genuine than I expected.

She was even more entitled than I thought.

"Hmm, not as horrible as I expected," she murmured even as she murmured, but I noticed her eyes widen as she walked closer to the pool, bigger than I expected. "Why can I sense that much mana here? Don't tell me that you have a Source here!"

I never heard what a source was, but from her reaction, it wasn't hard to guess it was some kind of natural or artificial location that radiated mana. Unfortunately, I had never actually heard something like that. The closest thing to it was the Mana Gems, radiating constant mana.

Clearly, it was important to her, enough to make her sound enthusiastic rather than her usual uncaring tone.

"Unfortunately, we don't, but I decided to make the room more comfortable by pushing some mana, to make it more welcoming. I hope it's not the case."

"Yeah," she murmured. "I forgot that you abominations receive your mana from that disgusting travesty against nature," she murmured, before continuing with a sharp tone. "Turn your back again," she added.

I did, but like before, it didn't prevent me from devouring the sight of her beautiful body as she kicked off her shoes and dress, this time water slowly devouring her body. Pity that the white bubbles hid her body.

However, once again, her offhand comment sent me thinking. The apparent lack of mana on the environment, and receiving it from the System — or at least, that was what I assumed by travesty and abomination — was another interesting thing. Maybe the system didn't only continuously devour the Divine Spark in its borders, but mana as well, before giving it back through the connection.

The system being responsible for mana distribution was not a surprise, as there had never been enough environmental mana around the environment to support my power. If there was that much free mana, there wouldn't be a need to use the magical reagents from the monsters to power the wards.

Of course, I hadn't thought about how the others received mana without the system, but from what she indicated, it was a resource that was available freely.

I wondered if that flaw affected the headmistress as well. Though, with the wards of the school under her control, it wasn't very likely. She could easily siphon some of the excess mana to have an advanced version of the bath my dragon guest was clearly enjoying.

"May I turn my back," I asked respectfully, like I hadn't been watching her, only to receive a hum.

She was already buried deep into her neck, humming in comfort, while the mana in the pool drained noticeably. Though, considering I had barely injected two hundred points of mana, it wasn't exactly an indicator.

"I can push some more mana into the pool," I said, surprised by her reaction, much more enchanted by mana than the effort I put on the decorations of the room.

"Really?" she asked, clearly enthusiastic, her eyes shining even more.

"As long as you don't mind me in the pool, of course," I added, never one to miss the opportunity to share a bath with a sexy woman.

"Is this necessary?" she asked, her enthusiasm clearly reduced.

"Well, the more contact I have with water, the more efficient it'll be. Of course, if you don't want an efficient service..."

She sighed, but her lack of an answer was good enough for me to take as an answer. Unlike her, I didn't warn her about my upcoming nakedness. And maybe, flexing my Charisma to look more impressive as well.

"What are you doing! Warn me first!" she gasped. Her face blushed as she exclaimed, which put an even bigger smile on my face.

It was good to know she was attracted to human males, at least enough to blush.

“You can always close your eyes, your dragoness,” I said, but that didn’t prevent her from keeping her open. She averted her gaze, but not enough to completely miss the sight.

A surprisingly cute reaction, even with her glowing emerald eyes.

However, when I slipped in the water, she was able to turn her gaze back to my face, suggesting while direct nudity was enough to fizzle her nerves, that didn’t extend to sharing a nude bath as long as bubbles were there to hide our bodies.

Luckily, I had the perfect way to distract her. I enchanted the water with some more mana, earning another soft moan.

[-182 Mana]

It wasn’t a great amount, but that didn’t prevent her from enjoying the sensation, suggesting that it wasn’t just power. Her reaction reminded me of someone that stepped into a warm room after working in the snow for a long time. Even if there was no risk of freezing, the warmth would give immense pleasure.

I was happy about it, as the more comfortable she got, the easier it would be for me to interrogate her about the life outside the System’s area of influence without making her suspicious.

“It must be a good difference after a long time of struggle without any decent source. How long it had, a couple months?” I asked as she enjoyed the treatment.

“Thankfully, not that long. Barely more than a week,” she said with a shudder.

I might have blamed her reaction for being spoiled, but considering the situations I had saved her from, it wouldn’t be a fair assessment.

Moreover, it was interesting the absolute lack of fear or paranoia after that dangerous events, implying that danger was a familiar companion. She was clearly not unfamiliar with battle, but her tactics could definitely use some benefit.

“I can imagine,” I said. “So, how did you get enough mana to still cast spells without the help of the System?”

“I had to hunt those crazed beasts, of course,” she answered, though the shudder she gave off suggested it was hardly a pleasant feeling. “That’s the only way of getting any mana in this



detestable place.”

“You weren’t lucky enough to find a Mana Gem?” I asked.

“Mana gem?” she asked, surprised. “Is this some kind of mana storage? Are they just laying around?”

It was an interesting reaction. Mana Gems were rare, but hardly something that would be a mystery to someone in her level if I was reading about her social status even half-accurately. Unless it was known by a different name.

Or there was no Mana Gem outside.

“Something like that,” I said, dismissing her question casually even as I injected some more mana to the pool, distracting her with pleasure. I didn’t want to explain more in detail, because it was a surprisingly dangerous proposition, risking revealing my lack of information, which would make her realize she had much bigger leverage.

I wanted to interrogate as much as I could manage before she realized that.

-----

[Level: 31 Experience: 493210 / 496000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6226 / 6324 Mana: 5389 / 7750 ]

SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Fifty-Six

After the little danger with Mana Gems, risking revealing my ignorance, I decided to let her take the lead in the conversation. “So, what kind of accident caused you to be lost in here?”

“An unfortunate one,” she stated with a frown, though that frown didn’t last long as I filled the pool with more of my mana.

[-613 Mana]

She took a deep breath, the mana density of the artificial pool decreasing significantly. “There’s not much to talk about, I was flying around in the Desolate Outlands for a mission, when I accidentally came across a raiding party of those Eternals, and I had to jump into the dimensional rift that they came out, and found myself in this accursed place.”

Interesting, I thought, her words giving me yet another information, suggesting the Eternals was conducting more aggression than I expected, underlining my lack of information even more.

Therefore making the sexy dragon in front of me, busy absorbing mana, even more important. I slipped even more mana to the pool, curious of the speed she continued to devour my mana. How big was her mana capacity?

[-942 Mana]

So, while she continued her story — which, unfortunately, focused on the details of her fight against the undead rather than the details of her life — I decided to follow what exactly she was doing with all the mana.

I expected to follow the mana into a reservoir, similar to the core that held our mana together in our soul space, ready to be used, but that turned out to be a complete inaccuracy.

It wasn’t that she didn’t have any reservoir. She had many, spread around her body, but I doubted that even their collective reservoirs would hold a thousand points of mana. And she had already absorbed more than that, yet continued to absorb.

[-1282 Mana]

Curious, I let even more mana infuse the water, but this time, watching even more carefully, maintaining an active connection with the flow.

Distracted by her own story and the comfort of the bath, she missed that particular detail, and I was free to follow the trail of the mana. I followed it until her bones, only for it to disappear at that point.

My eyes widened at the sudden disappearance, though luckily, I was able to hide it as a reaction to a particularly exciting part of her story. Inwardly, I focused my full attention to the exact moment of disappearance, to see whether she was somehow sending it to a different dimension.

The answer turned out to be no. The more accurate definition was that her bones were absorbing the mana, but it was assimilated with such a great speed that I had almost missed it. Curious, I paid careful attention to the point of absorption, and after a while, I noticed her bones were slowly transforming under the renewing flow of mana.

The transformation itself was quite mysterious. While I wasn't free to use my Biomancy abilities directly on her to assess the problem more carefully, I could get a rough understanding of the transformation that was going on her bones, and whatever the exact nature of the transformation was, its magnitude was impossible to deny. The power they radiated, the potential it implied, impressively significant.

Interestingly, it wasn't a quick transformation. Far from it. All the mana she had absorbed barely allowed her to transform a fleck of her bones, making me question just how much mana she would require for the complete transformation. To properly assess that, I needed a better understanding of what was going on, or a deeper analysis — which was hard to achieve without alerting her.

Still, my guess was easily in the millions.

“So, you have no idea why the undead suddenly decided to ambush and chase you that aggressively?” I asked, after she had mentioned the fifth ambush she managed to defeat before her eventual capture. I had already assumed it was less about the ritual, and more about the deal between Zokras and the Eternals.

“It was probably for the ritual they were doing?” she answered lazily, confirming that she had no idea why the Eternals were showing a special interest in her. I believed her, because I doubted that, in her relaxed state, she could slip into a lie.

I hummed, letting the silence rule the situation even as I tried to decide what to ask next. It was a difficult one. Unfortunately, her lengthy explanation about the ambushes she had gone

through didn't really help me, not in terms of understanding her limits...

And certainly not to understand why someone was so determined to kill her.

I let the silence stretch for a moment before I asked the next question. "So, what was the mission that made you end in Desolate Outlands?"

"Just a regular mission from the tribe, trying to get some resources for a potion," she answered, then frowned. "The mana is getting a bit thinner, why don't you release some more?"

"Unfortunately, I'm at my limit," I answered, which earned a frown immediately, showing an explosion was not too far away as well. I rushed to finish the explanation, just to bait her. "Unfortunately, carefully imbuing the water constantly without making it explode is exhausting."

She was quick to take the bait. "So, that's the challenge of releasing that's difficult, not the mana."

"Yeah," I answered. "It's much easier to do through direct physical contact."

"Is it?" she murmured a question, tensing slightly, smart enough to realize the direction that statement could easily evolve. "Any special place, or just skin-to-skin contact?"

"Any skin contact is sufficient," I answered her. "Though the back allows the easiest process, hands and feet work just as well."

"I see," she murmured. I said nothing for a moment, just enjoying the lingering expression of careful consideration on her face, as she clearly measured the sudden nature of the offer. The innocent nature of my offer, however, went along to reduce alertness, especially with a lot more mana tangling on the other side of the rope.

"Just my hand, right?" she asked a moment later.

"A hand is more than enough," I said, doing my best to suppress my naughty smile that threatened to pop out.

"G-good," she said, unable to hide the sudden stammer in her tone, showing that, despite her general aggressiveness, she was not familiar with the casual physical contact. However, more mana was clearly an enticing prospect.

Whatever process she was using to power up instead of the System and leveling up clearly

required a lot of mana, and now that she had found a renewable mana source, she was tempted to compromise on her personal modesty slightly to get even more of it.

Just as I liked.

“Hmm,” she murmured. “You’re not worthy of holding my hand,” she murmured even as she scooted closer to me, the constant bubbling of the water still hiding her body, and soon, her foot pushed out of the water.

“As you wish, your dragoness,” I said with a smirk, amused by her forced insult as she tried to undercut the weight of the touch even more. She wasn’t the first haughty woman I would tame bit by bit, but her true nature as a dragon certainly made it the most daring one.

I said nothing when she glared at me, just grabbed a hold of her foot, pressing my fingers on her sole.

[-273 Mana]

“Mmm,” she murmured as I slowly infused not only mana, but also some healing energy through her skin, making the touch even more comfortable as I unleashed my massaging skills, enjoying the softness of her skin.

Having an alternative form to protect her human-like body from the ravages of the environment was certainly handy.

It wasn’t surprising to see her stiffening suddenly as the pleasure hit her. “Why are you rubbing it?” she asked.

“Well, it helps to infuse mana quicker, but if you prefer the slower way...” I said, keeping my fingers still, but deliberately limiting the mana flow in the process. I even transformed the mana a bit, letting Arcana-natured mana slip through, to create the sensation that could be described as thorny.

To her credit, she resisted the contrasting sensation a bit, almost a minute, before she relented. “If it’s easier for you, feel free to move your fingers,” she said, like she was making a great sacrifice for my benefit.

Well, she was in the process, but luckily, she was unaware of the full extent of said sacrifice. “As you wish, your dragoness,” I said, even as I let my mana flow more.

But fate saw to it that I couldn't have a comfortable break where I just seduced a sexy dragon, because just as I started to intensify my mana flow, I felt a disturbance on the alert wards I had left on the fake dragon body.

Someone had just discovered its true nature.

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[Level: 31 Experience: 493210 / 496000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6226 / 6324 Mana: 6823 / 7750 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]



# Chapter One Hundred Fifty-Seven

The discovery wasn't the best news to receive, but I continued to massage the foot of the sexy dragon I was determined to seduce rather than exploding in panic.

Just because they had discovered the fake nature of the body didn't mean I need to burst into panic, not when there were several layers of defense between me and my destination. And even if the worst came to worst, I had my escape tunnels ready, and the hideout was primed for a disastrous explosion.

So, I turned my attention back to the sexy, emerald-haired curvy beauty, whose eyes started to flutter as the pleasure from the foot massage hit her just the right way.

Just because she believed she was in control didn't mean that she was actually in control. On the contrary, my experience showed me that it was the best way to lose the initiative. The leverage I had due to her clear need toward my mana only made things more delicious.

I continued to imbue the waters with my mana, of course, but not enough to interest her to devour it actively, just to maintain a warm, comfortable bath for her, reducing her alertness even more. Under the skillful treatment of my fingers, her legs started to tremble beautifully.

Unfortunately, the smoothness didn't continue for the other challenge. I had received another disturbance in my passive wards, this time suggesting that four people had discovered the remains of the tunnel I had created downward.

The passive wards weren't the most precise measurement tools, but even with their clunky detection capabilities, I could sense that the four were much more competent than the people that were currently going through some weird combination of challenge and examination.

Whoever was trying to find our location, was clearly not accidental.

Still, their progress wasn't enough to change the current position. I might react if the only reason I was trying to seduce her was the pleasure, but she represented an important, independent source of information for me, and properly 'softening' her for interrogation before my next meeting with the headmistress was a critical requirement for my ultimate success.

I needed to understand why the headmistress was asking for her before deciding whether to report my mission as a success or a failure.

Instead, I let another flow of mana to her body, this time even thicker, enjoying the way she

trembled under the renewed flow.

[-513 Mana]

Her eyes widened as she processed the impact of the mana flow, together with just a lingering touch of arousal, but too soft for her to actually be confident. “Is there anything wrong?” I asked. “I can keep the mana flow weaker if that’s what you prefer?”

“N-no, I can handle it,” she murmured, even though a hint of frustration passed through her face, no doubt directed at her lack of control.

However, it wasn’t as interesting as the sudden suspicious movement of her legs. The continuous bubbles were in place to block my view, but it wasn’t hard to imagine her legs subtly rubbing against each other while trying to look normal, suggesting a level of familiarity with self-satisfaction even in her human form.

I licked my lips, trying to get rid of the sudden dryness, even as I let my fingers move outside the agreed spot, caressing her ankle for a fleeting moment before returning back.

[-692 Mana]

That earned a glare, but the intense flow of mana proved sufficient to keep her silent. Instead, she shuffled in her place in a more noticeable manner, her naked shoulders shining under the soft, crystal lights of my hideout.

I dimmed the lights slightly, making the atmosphere even more amorous, while my fingers danced over her skin.

The gentleness of my touch contrasted greatly with the aggressiveness of the Eternals that was currently busy trying to dig down the tunnel. Interestingly, they weren’t being as aggressive as possible, which implied that they were trying to keep their actions concealed, but not to a level of keeping hidden from the main detection ward.

How interesting, I thought before shifting back to my main quest of taming a dragon, trying to face the question of how to handle her. The easiest option was to push her hard, aggressively, invading her body with a deluge of pleasure until her emotions turned into an endless whirlwind, unable to resist even the most liberal push.

Unfortunately, that strategy did not fit well with my long-term goals, especially with someone with a clearly explosive temper. I didn’t want her to submit to me in a moment of passion

where she could easily blame me. No, I needed her calm and fully aware as she asked for more, not only to receive more mana, but to receive pure, adulterated pleasure.

Luckily, from her gaze under her fluttering eyelids, I could see that it wasn't going to be as hard as I first feared, suggesting that I either miscalculated her resistance to pleasure, or her familiarity with receiving massages — or at least, the expert kind that I was capable of.

Either way, a smile popped to my face as I let my fingers wander down, subjecting her calves to the same treatment, loosening her muscles under my expert touch even as I rewarded her with another flood of mana, trying to keep outflow high — but not high enough that my regeneration unable to compensate for the endless flow.

[-672 Mana]

However, when my fingers disappeared underwater, caressing her soft thighs underwater, it earned a warning glare from her.

“You're feeling quite tense,” I said even as I started caressing her lower thighs with the assistance of some healing magic, working great benefits. “I can stop if you want?”

“No, keep going,” she surrendered not too soon after, unable to resist the pleasure of the massage. And, to her credit, considering the adventure she had suffered through, from undead ambushes to near-death struggle against the Eternals, she had definitely earned her relaxation.

She was tenser than a newly forged sword.

Of course, even with that, I doubted that she would be this willing to submit herself to my touch if I hadn't saved her from certain death, twice.

Heroics still had its perks.

After some caressing, I returned my fingers back to the middle of her sole for an encore, earning a surprisingly erotic grunt of pleasure in the process. Of course, even as I enjoyed the displays of pleasure she was revealing, I didn't stop examining the process of conversion around her bones, trying to identify the exact mechanism.

Unfortunately, it failed again, forcing me to focus on her quickening breaths and twitching muscles, the relaxing presence of my ever-flowing mana making it much easier.

And more importantly, I wasn't above a bit of cheating, using Biomancy to convert some of the

water into special massage oil that would stay on her skin, softening her against my touch even more, and the reduced friction helping me greatly.

This time, I kept my attention limited to her sole and her calf, which threw her expression into a beautiful conflict. There was nothing she could say about my limits, but a part of her clearly wanted me to return to her inner thigh, boosting her pleasure even more.

I stayed limited there for another five minutes, enjoying her quickening heartbeat, noticeable through her skin, using it as an opportunity to get a better sense of her pacing.

And then, a subtle gasp escaped her mouth, one that was too soft to be heard without my enhanced senses. I smirked victoriously, even as I let my touch move to her lower thigh once more, challenging her bruised silence.

[-421 Mana]

Her determination to stay silent was broken under the flood of mana, faster than my estimation.

However, before I could take an action, my attention was once again grabbed by the invaders in my tunnels. They had finally reached the large cave where I had my talk with my newest acquaintance. Interestingly, it seemed I wasn't the only one that was happily using the presence of the defensive ward for more aggressive casting, as their mana intensity surged.

Soon, they had discovered one of the fake tunnels I had left as bait, and started traveling, luckily to the opposite direction to my base. That fake tunnel would eventually come to an end, of course, but it meant I still had time to stretch my time.

And I intended to stretch that time as much as I manage, I thought even as I turned my attention back to the beauty that was trembling under my touch.

I had a dragon to tame.

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[Level: 31 Experience: 493210 / 496000]

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6226 / 6324 Mana: 6692 / 7750 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Fifty-Eight

Determined to seduce the transformed dragon that shared a bath with me, I decided to move to the next step. I carefully slid my hands forward, once again caressing her calf before arriving at her inner thigh, enjoying her flawless skin.

I was tempted to part her legs, giving me access to the treasure that lay at the end of my beautiful journey, but I managed to hold myself back. After all, despite her cute looks, I didn't forget the dangerous monster that lay under it, making the push inadvisable.

Instead, I dragged my hands over her legs up and down, the rhythm broken by occasional circular movement as I did my best to awaken her desires even as I continued to feed.

[-832 Mana]

The whimper that answered as her tenuous control over her own voice started to slip, followed by purrs of pleasure as I explored her inner thighs suggested that I was on the perfect track, even though my gentle movements were bringing me closer and closer to the danger zone.

Considering her petite body, it wasn't exactly a long distance.

Interestingly, as I got closer, she started to move in comfort, raising her hips as if she was trying to fasten my treatment. It was an instinctual reaction, because the more mana I transferred, the more distracted she started to get.

Her transformation process clearly required her active attention, at least when I was transferring as much mana as my regeneration could supply.

I wondered how she would have reacted if I pushed aggressively. Would she have reacted with another painful punch, or she would accept my intrusion as long as it meant more mana. Pity I didn't have the luxury of testing it. Her cooperation was too critical to risk.

Of course, that didn't mean I was resigned to the situation. Instead of pushing my fingers forward into her inviting tunnel, I stopped. "So, how was the massage," I asked even as I leaned back, making a show of stretching.

"Why did you stop," she asked?

"Expelling mana continuously is a tough task," I answered with a shrug. "My hands are starting to hurt."

I barely held back a chuckle at her disappointed hiss, clearly unhappy about the sudden ceasing. "You can't be serious," she stated.

"Of course I am," I said. "My mana reserves might be limitless, but the same isn't true for the capacity of my skin. After a while, it starts hurting, and if it doesn't stop, my skin burns," I said. Which was technically true. It was also true that I could cure those burns easily with Biomancy, but since I wasn't an idiot, I kept that particular fact for myself.

"But I was just about to complete a stage in my transformation," she said, her tone petulant. Seeing her petite body buried in water, her blushing face contorted in a childish expression, it was impossible to believe that she was a mighty dragon.

I shrugged again, doing my best to hide my smirk. "Unless you're willing to sit on my lap to increase skin contact, so that I could transfer even more mana, there's nothing I can do."

I expected to earn an aggressive reaction by those words, maybe even a punch, though I assumed it was a worthy punishment to add the seeds of some future closeness.

The thoughtful expression on her face surprised me.

"It's... unacceptable," she murmured, though the delay between her words, along with their listlessness, was rather suggestive. It had a tone of disbelief, as she was clearly smart enough to realize that I might be stretching the truth for my own ends, and she was clearly not experienced enough in the matters of the flesh to accept that as a fair trade.

Under normal circumstances, at least.

When the same implied offer came from her two-times savior, especially after an extended soak and massage that clearly awakened some unfamiliar emotions in her body, it was a completely different story.

"If you say so," I said, deliberately not pushing for more. I just closed my eyes and leaned back, enjoying the bubbling of the water even as I let some more into the water.

[-93 Mana]

Much less, of course. And after the earlier flood she experienced, giving a touch of mana was clearly a better way to torture her than depriving her completely. Especially since it gave her a reason to stay in the pool.

After a few seconds, I felt the mana getting drained slowly. I cracked my eyes, watching her carefully. The frustration was clear on her face, clearly not enjoying the sudden change of pace. I stayed in the pool, slowly radiating more and more mana, just enough to keep my appetite whetted.

Pity that she wasn't weak-willed enough to actually surrender to the desire before another critical trigger sent a warning. Luckily, it wasn't the actual route I had picked but one of the fake routes I had established just in case, but even the fact that they had discovered it meant that they were looking for the dragon with more deliberation than I expected.

It also meant that they knew dragons had the ability to transform, but that wasn't too shocking.

"I need to leave for a moment," I said as I suddenly stood up, revealing my naked, glistening body to her gaze. I was happy to note that her gaze stayed on my body for more than a few seconds.

"Why?" she asked.

"I need to check the surrounding wards, to make sure everything is working properly," I said. I didn't tell her the truth, because, without her, I could ambush them much easier.

She didn't exactly give me a sneaky vibe.

With that, I dressed quickly — but not quickly enough to prevent her from getting a decent glimpse of my body — I was back into the tunnels. From what I was receiving from the detection wards, I assumed that there were five people in the tunnels, but luckily, they didn't stay as a group, but split into many directions, prioritizing time over security, assuming that in an area under their control, there was no risk doing so.

It was a bad assumption.

Reopening the tunnels I had collapsed earlier was the easiest way of reaching them, but if I had done so, I would end up finding, but if I did so, I had to retreat back, which would lead them directly into the safe house I had established.

Instead, I started creating a new tunnel even as I lamented the number of underground construction work I had to do recently, reaching a ludicrous level.

The detour that I had to take delayed me a bit, and when I finally got close enough to them, two of them were together.



“Any of you were able to find it?” one of them asked.

“Dead end. How about yours?”

“No, none of those tunnels reaches anywhere, are we sure she didn’t go back to the surface?” asked another.

“Not likely,” the second one stated. “Even if she had been transformed, it’s almost impossible for her to slip through the wards if she was on the surface. Dragons are not exactly sneaky.”

“Then, where is she? We have checked all tunnels, and we still can’t find her. Maybe we should stop?”

“Do you want to explain to the Elder that we have screwed up one task she assigned to us?” the first one asked, his voice tense.

“No way in hell, she’s scary,” said the second one. There was still a thick wall of earth between us, preventing me from seeing them, but I was sure that he was shivering in fear. Whoever they were talking about, she was clearly scared.

“Then what are we going to do, we don’t have a lot of time left. We can’t just disappear for hours without some very pointed questions.”

“We just need to continue searching until the Trial ends,” the other one. “And if the worst happens and we can’t return until the challenge ends, we just need to bribe them more to look away.”

“You’re right, we still have a day before the trial ends. That should be enough to find and kill her.”

Footsteps reached my ear, suggesting they started walking away to restart their search, though the second one stopped after a few steps. “Do you know why we’re trying to kill her, other than the obvious?”

“I don’t, and I don’t recommend you to start digging about the reasons for her actions, or for any elders for that matter. Not if you want to continue living, at least.”

With that, they started walking around, leaving me alone to search. With a sigh, I moved even deeper into the distance, trying to decide what to do next. The discussion I had stumbled on forced me to change my plans even more.

The fact that they were trying to kill her was not a surprise, but the fact that only a small fraction of them was trying to do was suspicious. It was a pity that the ones that were trying to kill her clearly knew little about her.

It meant there wasn't a lot I could do that right now, though that didn't mean the trip itself was completely a waste. I created two dragon simulacrums that could be triggered from a distance, in case they started to draw closer. Knowing that their actions were limited as they tried to conceal themselves from their allies gave me several more options to distract them.

[-2731 Mana]

Unfortunately, it also meant that killing them was a bad idea. Luckily, they were kind enough to inform me that their time was limited. After establishing some more extra tunnels to waste their time even more, I went back to my shelter.

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#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

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Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Fifty-Nine

When I returned, I found my dragon sitting on a chair, wearing a different dress. This time, it was an intriguing mixture of blue and white. Surprisingly, it had a large slit going through the side, revealing most of her beautiful legs, while the dress itself wrapped tightly around her body to display her curves excellently.

The view was too beautiful not to be deliberate.

“Was everything in order with the wards?” she asked, unable to hide her nervousness as she looked at me.

“No problem at all,” I answered with a shrug, not feeling the need to go deeper into the details. With our enemies solidly on the fake tracks I had created, there was no need to sour the delicious atmosphere I managed to develop.

I didn’t say anything as I walked to another seat, leaning back and closing my eyes rather than interacting with her, despite the clear invitation her dress represented.

Sometimes, you needed to pull back to make sure the hunt went without a hitch.

And she clearly didn’t appreciate the silence, if the frustrated hitch in her tone was any indicator. “What’s the plan? Are we going to just stay here and hide?”

“Exactly. It’s clear that they are not here permanently, and the wards they put are not the type you can maintain for weeks and weeks without having side effects,” I said. “If they wanted to stay, they would have used something more selective.”

“Are you sure?” she questioned. “Those crazy abominations can’t be really predicted by logic, they do things senselessly, like the raid that forced me into this horrible world.”

I opened my eyes, pinning her under my gaze. “Either we go out and kill all of them, or we wait. I don’t know you, but the first option isn’t really attractive for me, but feel free to go for a hunt if you want.”

Her silence was enough as an answer. Of course, I could have shared the little discussion I overheard, but for the moment, keeping her in the dark was the safer option.

Especially since a small faction in Eternals was deliberately hunting her, which made me question whether her presence was accidental in the first place. Maybe the raid wasn’t just a

coincidence, but an intentional ploy to drive her here.

That faction was determined to kill her. All that needed to be answered was how much.

“It’s a defeatist attitude,” she said.

“If it is, it is,” I said with a shrug, not reacting to her juvenile taunt. I was too experienced to fall to her transparent attempt to goad me into explaining the situation in a more detailed fashion. Interrogation, especially the subtle, unofficial kind that was going between us, was a game of calm minds and false fronts, where the cooler heads ultimately prevailed.

Nothing she had done gave me the impression that she had the nerves to handle a subtle dance like that.

After I shrugged off her taunt, she fell silent, unable to say anything. The silence stretched for minutes as I leaned back once more, enjoying the opportunity to rest. I didn’t have the luxury of sleeping, of course, and it wasn’t just about missing the opportunity to seduce my unexpected guest.

I simply didn’t have the luxury of stopping to observe the detection wards, in case they stumbled upon the correct route after their repeated failures.

“What if they don’t go away in a few days?” she decided to speak after a few minutes, disturbing my rest. “Are we going to stay cooped inside?”

“We can think that when that happens,” I answered, this time not even bothering to open my eyes even as I heard her standing up, walking toward me.

“Maybe you should continue transferring mana,” she suggested. “There’s more chance of us getting away if I get stronger.”

“You need to wait a few hours for my fingers to recover,” I said, deliberately not mentioning the alternative I had suggested earlier. I expected her to argue, but hearing her footsteps getting closer surprised me. For a moment, I expected her to sit on my lap as I suggested.

Unfortunately, after a hesitant stagger, she turned and walked back, showing that while the prospect of more mana was tempting, it wasn’t tempting enough to push her to make such a radical move. At least, not since she had the opportunity to cool down after the massage in the pool.

Fucking bastards, I thought. If it wasn't for their sudden presence, ruining the mood, she might have already decided to try the suggestion. Instead, she sat on the opposite side of the room, waiting for me to act.

Her silence didn't last long. "So, what are your combat capabilities?" she asked, barely five minutes later. I wondered whether it was a draconic trait, or it was more about her personality.

"Nothing too spectacular," I answered. "A little elemental, a little knife fighting. I'm mostly a warding expert," I said, underselling my abilities slightly. No need to reveal the full extent of my abilities, not when there was still a chance of her aligning herself with the headmistress tightly.

I had no idea about their relationship, and at this point, I didn't have the luxury of betting on it.

"You're not a combat mage?" she asked, but I could sense the way her tone flickered, her gaze turning dismissive. I barely held back myself from shaking my head dismissively. She was clearly one of those people — well, dragon — that dismissed anyone that didn't focus on front-line combat, even when my extraordinary abilities had saved her life twice.

"No," I said. "By the way, you didn't even tell your name yet."

"You're right, I didn't," she said, her smugness clear, like she had achieved a big victory. I might have assumed it was a great insult to ask a dragon her name, but the pedestrian nature of her smugness suggested that it was a childish snub rather than a big cultural taboo.

I had no intention of arguing about it with her, of course. Being underrated and dismissed was always a useful trait. Instead, I continued to release some mana, though much less than the earlier treatment in the bath.

[-53 Mana]

It was just enough to maintain the mana density of the room even as she devoured it consistently, using the lingering connection between me and the floating particles of mana to get an even better understanding of the transformation that was going on in her body. It was a slow-going process from a distance, but as the time passed, I was slowly getting convinced that whatever was going on was either instinctual, or practiced enough to turn something habitual to the level of breathing. She only needed to pay attention when she was dealing with an excessive mana flow, like my ear

Of course, her transformation wasn't the only thing that was occupying my attention. No, most of my attention was on observing the Eternals that were doing their best to handle the maze I

had created, their spells getting stronger and stronger with each passing hour, suggesting increasing desperation.

Too bad for them that the more forceful they were being, the easier it got for them to get lost in the labyrinths I had created for that exact purpose, their mana blanketing the background, making it even harder to notice the subtle traps I had established.

None of those traps were offensive in nature, of course. Killing them didn't work for my interest, not when it would give them and the mysterious elder behind them an excuse to stick around and search for it, maybe even bring more power from the mysterious organization after losing a few of their members.

Since they didn't know why they were tasked to kill the dragon in the first place, it didn't even make sense to take the risk of capturing one and interrogating them. As much as I would appreciate the chance of getting more information about the Eternals, I was trapped in the limits of two overwhelming wards they had established.

Not exactly the time to be adventurous.

Instead, I lazed around, saying nothing. My guest looked at me questioningly several times, clearly expecting me to push for more so that she could shut me off, but I decided not to give her the pleasure, even when she implied she might be willing to receive another massage.

Then, the wards disappeared, as sudden as they appeared. "Finally," she said as she stood up, already starting to transform as a pair of wings shoot off her back.

"Wait," I said, and, to her credit, she did so, though her wings stayed on her back, suggesting she was capable of transforming halfway, which had some interesting implications for fun times. I took note of it for the future.

"What!" she said angrily.

"We need to wait for a few hours, to make sure they are gone," I said, not revealing to her that I could still feel two people still digging around the fake tunnels I had created.

"I'm not a coward," she said.

"Be my guest if you want to get caught for the third time," I said with a dismissive gesture, knowing it would sting her pride. She growled in anger, suggesting that if I dared to say those words in a time where the memories of her imprisonment weren't fresh in her mind, she might

have reacted much more explosively than her current mood.

She said nothing, but she sat back, which was all I needed as an answer. I sat down as well, even as I flared my magic, ordering two fake dragons I had created in quick succession, drawing our potential attackers away. I didn't inform her of that particular fact, of course, as the sight of her pouting face was too entertaining to miss, especially when it contrasted with her beautiful, revealing dress...

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#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]



## PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Sixty

I felt weird as I prepared to leave the tunnels, relaxed, which was a great contrast to my earlier feelings, especially when those wards suddenly appeared.

Sometimes, it was easier to avoid the combat than pointlessly seeking the challenge, even though it earned a dismissive glare from my reluctant companion. "Turn your back," she ordered.

"Why?" I asked.

"I need to transform."

"No," I said.

"What do you mean, no?" she said. "Do you expect me to walk?"

"An emerald dragon soaring through skies is hard to miss. So unless you want to get caught for the third time..."

She let out a frustrated growl, but luckily, she didn't continue with the transformation. Her confident expression, however, twisted when I started walking toward the entrance, not even bothering to talk to her.

I smiled when I heard her footsteps, hurried as she followed me. "W-wait," she stammered as I started to move away. I turned, doing my best to look surprised and hiding the satisfaction I felt. I needed her to follow me, but asking her directly would have given her the initiative, something I wasn't entirely willing to. Not because I wanted to succeed for the headmistress, but because a talk between the two would resolve a lot of my questions.

"Yes?"

"Are you going to just leave?" she asked, clearly surprised that I didn't offer to accompany her.

"Well, since the wards are gone, I can retreat," I said, acting ignorant of what she was implying.

"Are you going to leave me alone?" she said, crossing her arms in an entitled manner. It was an annoying attitude, but her arms crossed under her tits, pushing them to an amazing level, especially with her short frame.

“I’m not heartless, you can come with me if you want, I’m sure my employer would appreciate meeting with you,” I offered, though I kept my tone simple, like I wouldn’t be affected by her decision either way. Her eyes glowed even more with fury, clearly not appreciating my dismissive attitude.

She said nothing, but as I continued to walk, she followed, which was better than any acceptance.

Her silence didn’t last long as she noticed the direction I was taking, using the tunnels to go even deeper rather than going to the surface. “Aren’t we supposed to leave?”

“We will,” I said even as I reached to the edge of the tunnel, using my wards to make sure there was no one nearby, and I started casting a spell, summoning one of my fake elemental mounts, this time an earth elemental, to allow us to travel underground for a while, at least until we were reasonably away from Mount Doom, in case they had spies observing the mountain despite the fake dragons that flew away.

The reaction of my guest, however, was completely unexpected. “What are you doing, you madman!” she exclaimed even as she raised her hands, her mana gathering into a mana spike, dangerous enough to send shivers over my skin.

Interestingly, she was not targeting me, but my spell.

“Are you mad!” she gasped after my spell was destroyed.

“About what, exactly?” I said. “I was just creating us a mount.”

“And you decided to summon an elemental to do it! There are easier ways to kill yourself!”

“It’s just a fake elemental, what’s the big deal?” I said.

“There’s no such thing as a fake elemental!” she growled. “Any physical body you create is just an invitation for them to possess. Who even taught you it’s a good idea!”

Considering the number of times I had used that trick to travel, it was clearly not a problem, especially since no one that saw me commented on it. Meanwhile, her reaction suggested that doing so was a certain disaster. “I have used that trick many times,” I explained.

“Impossible!”

“It’s a difference due to the System,” I said, making a wild guess, though it was a confident

guess.

If the System could prevent Gods from appearing in its domain, why should it allow true elementals to appear?

“Really?” she murmured, her earlier fervor immediately turning into hesitation. “It even prevents intervention of Elementals? How?”

My answer was a simple shrug. I had no idea how the System worked despite my experiments, and I had no problems admitting it. “It prevents Gods from intervening. Is it too surprising that it blocks Elementals as well?”

“I guess not,” she murmured, looking thoughtful for a moment before her determination came back. Though, from her tone, I got the impression that Elementals weren’t too far below gods in the totem pole, which was a scary thought. “Still, I have no intention of riding an elemental back.”

However, even as she delivered it petulantly, I noticed she was having trouble suppressing her trembles. She was clearly having trouble suppressing her instinctual fear.

“As you wish, as long as you are willing to walk the distance like a peasant,” I countered, curious which one she would pick.

“I will walk,” she said, not even spending a second on the insult. Maybe she was afraid of the elementals even more than I assumed. What an interesting nugget of information.

“I was joking,” I said, quick to answer even as I conjured another vehicle, this time a simple arcana platform with two chairs. It was not only slower than the elemental mount, but also it cost much more mana.

[-2692 Mana]

Luckily, I had the luxury to waste mana.

“But it’s going to be much slower,” I warned even as I gestured her to take a seat after sitting, and started moving, without bothering to wait for an answer, the platform creating a brand new tunnel as it moved.

“Why didn’t you use it earlier?” she asked. “It’s clearly easier than creating the tunnels directly.”

“Platform has a bigger magical signature, so it’s easier to detect magically. If I tried to use that, even with the intervention of the wards, they would have discovered our location.”

She nodded, but said nothing as we continued to travel underground. It took several minutes for us to finally get out of the mountain, and since I wasn’t using the most direct route toward Silver Spires, I wasn’t afraid of having observers that would detect us.

I still send a wave of detection magic just to make sure, of course, but luckily, there was no one else around. “Ah, fresh air,” the dragon murmured as we pushed out, a smile appearing on her face.

As a dragon, she clearly didn’t appreciate staying underground. Understandable as she could fly with her own power.

“Yeah, it’s a nice change,” I said.

“Really, I could have sworn you’re part-rabbit, with the ease you are having underground.” I shrugged at her juvenile insult, amused by her effort more than anything. Silence stretched for some more before I sent a magical message to the headmistress — well, to her office, but essentially the same — saying to her that despite some challenges, I managed to save the dragon from a surprise Eternal presence, and we’re coming back.

“What was that?” she asked the moment I sent the message, not exactly trying to sound mysterious.

“I informed my employer about our unexpected guest, of course. It’s not something you want to surprise.”

“I see,” she murmured. “Who is your employer?”

Once again, her tone was calm, but I didn’t miss the undercurrent of hesitancy. Despite her attitude, she was smart enough to realize that meeting with the headmistress was an action that was hard to come back from, losing the initiative completely. So, she was trying to interrogate me subtly, without making me alert. The fact that she waited until I had sent the message, giving her an excuse to talk about it, was the best sign of it.

“Don’t worry, the headmistress is a nice woman, if a bit ambitious. I’m sure you two can come to an agreement,” I said.

“How nice?” she asked, trying to sound nonchalant, but after being captured twice, her

hesitancy wasn't surprising. The interesting thing was the casual attitude she was trying to force despite the importance of the question. Clearly, she prioritized her pride over her safety.

"Well, she likes to show off, but ultimately, she's a fair leader. Not to mention there's no love lost between her and the Eternals or the undead, so I'm sure she would appreciate helping another enemy of theirs, as long as you approach the cooperation with an open mind," I suggested, knowing that those stock words were completely useless.

I wasn't well-intentioned in my assessment, as a seamless cooperation between them was hardly to my benefit. I wanted both of them to dance around each other, hesitant, reliant on me to facilitate the cooperation.

At this point, the headmistress was reasonably convinced of my loyalty. And I had saved my current passenger's life twice, from almost-certain death, which should be enough for her to trust me more than the headmistress unless there was a much stronger connection between them — which I doubted, as if that had been the case, the headmistress would have given me a much more detailed assignment.

Manipulating two to maximize my benefits was not the nicest thing to do, but, considering neither of the two mysterious ladies respected me enough to actually tell me their names, I wasn't exactly concerned about it.

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Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6226 / 6324 Mana: 5293 / 7750 ]

SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Sixty-One

Using the platform rather than one of the usual elementals I preferred to use, the journey to Silver Spires took more than two hours rather than the usual minutes, but at least, it was a more comfortable ride.

Pity that my reluctant guest was not in a mood to experiment, and kept her mouth shut other than occasional attempts to probe me about my employer, and I didn't do anything other than deflecting her.

Then, Silver Spires entered our field of vision. "And we're at our destination," I said, even as I noted her distaste while she looked at the school. It was clearly below her mysteriously high standards.

Though, it might be also about the battle damage on the walls, still being repaired.

She said nothing even as I drove the platform to the ground before I let it dissipate. She looked at me questioningly. "I'm afraid we're going to cover the rest of the distance by walking," I said. "And before you ask, no you can't transform unless you want to shout your location to our lovely adversaries."

"I know," she growled in annoyance, the rumbling it created enough to remind her that she was a dragon.

The rest of the walk passed silently even as I led her to sneak through the defensive wards, their damaged state making it even easier to pass through. The moment I entered the school, however, a magical message from the headmistress arrived, telling me to bring the dragon to a special basement building, rather than her office.

Interesting, I thought even as I guided her toward the location the headmistress suggested. It was the first time she arranged a meeting outside her tower, which forced me to reevaluate a few assumptions about her location. Maybe I had misread just how dependent she was on the coverage of her tower.

With that in mind, we passed through the specified entrance, only to find ourselves in a dim tunnel going down, the route itself confusing.

"What a weird tunnel," the dragon murmured as we moved deeper. "Those wards feel familiar..."



I said nothing, though I could easily understand her concern. The sensation of the wards was rather irregular, making us lose the sense of direction as we walked. I had no doubt that, if I hadn't saved her life twice, my guest would have been rebelling against the idea of following deeper into a mysterious tunnel.

As I moved deeper, my sense of direction started to disappear, forcing me to stretch my Perception stat to the limit to maintain it. However, it was when I felt the partial block on the system, once again preventing me from communicating efficiently, I recognized the source of the ward.

She was using Darkness Divine Spark to create the ward.

Interestingly, while the tunnel had several twists and turns, ultimately, we ended up under her tower, forcing me to revisit my assumptions once again, including why she would spend all that effort just to hide the fact.

Unfortunately, it wasn't answered immediately when I finally reached the destination, directly under the tower. It was a huge room, with an unnecessarily high ceiling — unless one planned for a dragon to reside there in the first place.

However, despite being a basement, the room wasn't poorly furnished. On the contrary, there was a nice living room on the corner, mostly using the same crystal for the construction, but also using very expensive-looking blue and black fabrics. But that part was just a detail compared to a huge crystal pool, large enough for a dragon to rest comfortably.

One thing that surprised me was, however, was the mana density of the room. The air was thick with mana, and the pool was even thicker. Though, a glance at the wards that supported the process suggested that the process wouldn't deliver as much mana as I had been transferring, which was a benefit.

Of course, my guest didn't glance around, looking at the hooded figure that was standing on the other end of the room. "You can go," the headmistress said, gesturing me to leave.

The dragon glanced at me, but didn't comment, even as I turned and left the room.

Not permanently, of course, as I was far too curious about listening to the discussion. And since I was able to sneak into the headmistress' private room, sneaking to the basement was hardly a challenge. There was only one problem, that if I suddenly disappeared from the wards, the headmistress would have been suspicious.

Meaning, I had to leave the tunnel first before coming back. The process had been rather smooth, though it cost me several precious minutes, especially on the path to return, where I had to carefully sneak through the wards without alerting the headmistress.

When I arrived at the room, creating a tiny hole in the wall, the view surprised me.

The headmistress had long removed her robe, revealing her armored state, with a sword on her back. However, despite her pose, she was sitting on a chair. And the dragon, still in her human form, was sitting across her, a chair between them.

However, the interesting thing was their expressions. Considering the relative power balance of a headmistress with a school under her command, compared to a lost dragon that was cut all kinds of support, hunted by a faction of the Eternals.

Their expressions told a different story. The dragon leaned back, confident, while the headmistress was lost in her thoughts, her eyebrows creased. It was the most worried I had ever seen her, even compared to when she was alone.

“It’s not like you have a lot of options, little bird,” said the dragon, her mocking tone surprising me. “It’s not like you can just go back and ask the assistance of the God of Light, not after your little grubby fingers reached something you shouldn’t have.”

How interesting, I thought. There was no doubt about what she was talking about. There was only one reasonable probability considering the speed at which she had been discovered.

Divine Spark of Light.

I had already been suspicious of the headmistress’ attempts to absorb the Divine Spark, as it was clearly something above her power level, but, looking at their relative attitude, it was not only deeply forbidden, but also clearly not going well.

“Still, asking me to change sides...” the headmistress murmured indecisively.

“You should have thought of that before trying to devour something you can’t handle,” the dragon cut in, smugly. “But I shouldn’t be surprised by it. For all of your supposed loyalty, you little birds are always quick to rebel at the slightest opening. Just like-” she continued, only for the headmistress to cut her off angry.

“I’m nothing like her!” she shouted, power radiating off her in waves, Divine Spark mixing with her mana.

“Calm down, I’m joking,” the dragon said, taking the headmistress’ explosion in stride. “Though, with the ease you’re willing to use a spark of darkness...” she added, her words fading as the headmistress tensed like she was about to attack.

The dragon stopped, because, luckily, despite her arrogance, she was smart enough not to excessively antagonize one that controlled her current residence. Instead, she looked around, examining the mana in the room, including the small pieces of Divine Spark her opponent slowly pulling back. Interestingly, she didn’t make an attempt to devour them.

I wondered if it was just about her respect — or fear — or it wasn’t something she could handle in the first place.

The dragon continued talking after taking a moment to calm herself. “You don’t have a lot of time to decide. You’re already leaking Divine Spark. A year at most, and you’ll lose the ability to control it and it’ll burn you.”

“Are you sure your master could help me?” the headmistress said hesitantly, after a long pause.

“She has achieved much more challenging activities than that. And more importantly, she’s not a miser like that old codger. She’ll only ask for a very reasonable payment.”

I had no idea who the dragon was referring to, but I was sure that whoever she was, she wouldn’t be that generous. People in power never were, especially when one reached them was utterly helpless.

The headmistress must share my opinion, because rather than answering immediately, she decided to delay, though, the delay itself was enough to show just how big her need was, so much that she didn’t even try to threaten the dragon.

And, compared with the sudden change of her earlier ploy and her current attitude, it suggested that the dragon had an extraordinary identity, much bigger than the headmistress had been expecting.

“It’s a big decision, I need time to think,” the headmistress finally admitted.

“Take as much as time as you need,” the dragon answered with mocking laughter. “It’s not me under the risk of exploding a year.”

The headmistress stood up, like she was about to leave, but the dragon spoke again. “Not before arranging some amenities for me, of course,” the dragon added.

“As you wish,” the headmistress answered between her clenched teeth, barely able to spit out her words. “But we don’t have a lot in this dimension, not with the system constantly devouring any natural treasure.”

“Oh, don’t worry about it,” the dragon said with a chuckle. “You just need to arrange more mana flow to my residence.”

“I can do that, but there are limits. We can’t weaken the wards too much, or the defenses will fall, and you’ll be revealed,” she reminded.

“Don’t worry, just as much as you can arrange. And one other thing,” she added, her playfully vicious smirk giving me an idea of what was going to follow. “I just need a servant to handle mundane activities for me. Cleaning, preparing my food, and other mundane activities. The boy that helped me earlier looks like a good worker. Arrange that for me, please?”

“But—“ the headmistress started, only for her words to fade when she caught her opponent's expression. “I’ll arrange it,” she resigned, adding another role to my already complicated resume.

How fascinating...

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Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Sixty-Two

I dashed out of the tunnel the moment their meeting concluded, as I expected the headmistress to send me a message the moment she was back at the office, and it would have been better if I wasn't under wards when she did so.

Especially since these wards were under her direct control.

It was good that I did, because, a few seconds after I had left the wards, I had received the message, a message that would have failed to pass the protective wards without triggering.

Close call. Unsurprisingly, she was asking me to visit her in her office immediately. Knowing the severity of the situation, I rushed. A minute later, I was knocking on her office door, the oppressive feeling of the wards not even registering after the repeated exposure.

The door once again opened wordlessly, revealing the headmistress sitting behind her desk, wearing her dark robe, but the hood was down, revealing her beautiful face that contrasted greatly with the rest of the dark decorations of the room.

She did her best to look impassive, but even without watching her fateful meeting, I would have noticed the panicked expression on her face. It was a pity that I missed half of the meeting, as I would have loved to see the exact reason why she had been unsettled to such an unbelievable degree, probably relating to the faction the dragon belonged to.

"I have another mission for you, a very important one," she said, fully confident that I would accept despite the mental crisis she was going through. It would be a lie to say that I wasn't tempted to reject her, just to see her confidence shatter even more.

Too bad that the cost of doing so was too heavy for momentary entertainment.

"As you wish," I said, accepting the mission before she even gave the details. Ironically, spying on my own boss was very helpful to sell an image of devotion.

She accepted that move readily, confident in my loyalty after observing a decent amount of Divine Spark, not aware that it was safely locked in my body behind several complicated, ever-changing wards, preventing it from even slightly affecting my mind.

"I need you to spy on her," she explained, once again economical in her words, though there was no doubt who she was referring.

“How, magically, or physically?” I asked.

“I arranged you as the servant for her. It’ll give you an excuse to stay close. You can observe her in detail, and record anything valuable,” she explained, acting like it was her own idea rather than a request she was unable to resist.

Her attempts to be sneaky were simply cute.

“As you wish,” I said.

She stayed silent for a moment, before adding. “It’s good that you survived,” she said, complimenting me about the mission. Since I had already included a report of the mission with the message I had sent earlier, she didn’t ask any follow-up questions.

Interestingly, her lack of follow-up questions about the move suggested an interesting detail. Because, while I had explained the challenges I had experienced during the event, I had deliberately avoided mentioning anything about my speculations about the Eternals’ movements, in particular to its possible function as some kind of training program, not wanting to reveal to her how much information I was able to collect under the restrictions of the wards.

The fact that she didn’t ask a single question either meant that she didn’t care about it at all — which wasn’t likely for someone that managed to last two centuries as the head of a political entity — or she had a good idea what was the point all along.

“Is there any specific thing you want me to do? Interrogation, maybe some torture—” I offered, only to be cut off, a beautiful panic appearing in her face.

“No!” she gasped, her face covered with emotion the second time — the first being the suggestion about her nakedness under her robe during her first reveal. To her credit, it didn’t take long for her to suppress that panic, and continue with her usual monotone tone. “Try to keep her happy. She is an important connection.”

“How nice?” I asked, deliberately pushing the headmistress a bit.

“Within reason, but check with me if she asks anything extreme,” the headmistress answered.

I nodded, barely holding back my smirk. I didn’t know whether she didn’t realize or she just didn’t care because she thought of me as a loyal soldier, but she had just given me a huge opportunity to do a lot of things, using my new ‘mistress’ as an excuse.

Before leaving, however, I decided to ask another question, one that was very important. “What if she wants that...” I said, looking up to where her room was, implying that she might ask for the Divine Spark.

“Don’t worry,” she said, surprising me with the quickness of her answer, so much that it showed on my face. “Dragons have no use for it. They only use pure mana.”

Another interesting detail.

“Do you think you can handle another transfer?” she asked.

“It might be safer to wait another day, the struggle to keep her safe exhausted my body too much,” I said, both selling an idea of loyalty that forced me to push my limits just to defend someone for her — and a struggle that was much harder than the actual events — but also subtly implying that, while I was strong, that strength wasn’t without a significant cost.

Being underestimated never hurts.

“As you wish,” she said as her gaze fell back on her desk, dismissing me without even mentioning it.

I left her office, and went back to the basement, to the room of my new mistress. I knocked on the door.

“Come in,” called a familiar voice, and I entered, only for my gaze to capture the beautiful sight of my new boss for a foreseeable future.

And what a sight it was. Unlike the previous dress, she was wearing a light green dress, half-transparent as it wrapped around her body, tantalizingly displaying her amazing curves despite her petite body. It was not a dress, but a nightie, the type a concubine might wear to seduce her Emperor.

Her pose was even more interesting than her dress. She sat on a chair, her legs crossed, showing a great deal of her smooth skin through the slit that cut through her nightie’s skirt, enhancing the eroticism even more. The subtle leaning of her body enhanced her cleavage even more than her nightie had done in the first place.

Yet, despite her seductive look, clearly, it wasn’t the message she was trying to give. She was partially facing the door, but not directly looking, even as I entered, like I wasn’t important enough to actually pay attention. The platform under her chair — one that was not there



earlier — elevated her seat almost like a throne.

Her words hardly disagreed with the impression. “My servant ... you’re finally here,” she said, hardly managing to hide the glee in her tone.

Ironically, the obvious glee in her tone turned what might have been an insulting attitude into something amusing. The glee she felt over having power over me was so obvious that, ironically, it weakened her hold.

Though, the fact that I had been fondling her naked body a few hours earlier hardly helped her attempts to look authoritative.

“Oh, yes,” I said, giving her a rebellious, frustrated gaze. It was fake, of course, but it was easier to fake resentment rather than looking impervious and forcing her to ramp up her attitude until she actually become annoying.

“Yes, what?” she said smugly as she looked to me, her earlier impervious attitude forgotten the moment she got the slightest victory, suggesting my — hopefully short — time as a servant wouldn’t be too difficult.

Her next order just reinforced that impression. “Wash my feet,” she ordered as she gently shook her crossed foot, which in turn moved her dress more, giving a short yet delicious glimpse of her beautiful inner thighs, with a tantalizing — but unfilled — promise of giving a glimpse of her core.

“As you wish, mistress,” I said with a defeated sigh, giving her the thing she wanted more than the actual massage as I walked toward her.

As I walked toward her, however, I did more than appreciate her sexy body. I started examining the room, in particular, the mana regeneration capacity of the room even as she happily devoured it. It must be another part of their arrangement, because the intensity was much higher than what I first saw, something that was about half of my regeneration.

Which meant it was more or less as intense as a dozen level thirty mages’ regeneration, hardly something to dismiss, even for something as vast as Silver Spires.

Though, it also highlighted just how ridiculous my power, in particular, my mana regeneration was getting.

As I arrived in front of her, I conjured a crystal basin, another spell filling it with mana-induced

water, costing me a significant chunk of mana.

[-2375 Mana]

Then, I crouched down in front of her, grabbing her foot, ready to give a massage, deliberately ignoring the amazing sight I would receive the moment I would glimpse up, at least at the moment, and instead, stayed deliberately focused on the massage the full extent of the duration, even though she started to let out frustrated growl repeatedly as the arousal clearly build-up while my mana penetrated through her skin.

Meanwhile, I was testing just how crazy I could drive her with another foot massage...

[-1394 Mana]

With great success. Yet, even as she started parting her legs 'accidentally' I resisted the urge to peeking, driving the impression even higher.

"Is there anything else, Mistress?" I asked when I finally finished and stood up, only to catch a beautiful expression on her face, a mixture of arousal and annoyance, accompanied by the shock that I resisted the implied invitation to push more — therefore depriving her the opportunity to slap me down.

"No, you can go, I want to rest," she answered as she waved her hand dismissively, chasing me away. "Make sure to be ready here in the morning to serve, though."

"As you wish," I said as I gave her an exaggerated bow, once again not reacting to the glimpse of skin as I walked away.

But when I finally left the room, the smile on my face was erased quickly. Playing with her was fun, but I had a lot to do with our royal guests.

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Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Sixty-Three

As I walked toward the temporary residence of our Royal guests, my mind was already on how I could leverage the direct access to the artifact, to deepen my understanding of how to handle the Divine Spark.

Though, it was interesting a ruined piece of an ancient artifact, with its broken handle, cracks, and more rust than metal, had such a great impact on my development path.

However, when I found myself at the separate building assigned for the Crown Princess, I focused on the presence. “May I ask you to send a message to Lady Delia,” I said to the nearest guard. Interestingly, rather than asking a reason or an explanation, he just nodded before sending a message.

They were clearly instructed to do so.

Even more interestingly, rather than leading me inside to meet with Delia, the handmaiden responsible for arranging my services — and seducing me to a betrayal in the process — the guard asked me to wait.

A moment, I thought that to be a subtle power play, trying to keep me waiting at the entrance to remind me that I didn’t have the luxury to go around as I wished, especially this late. To my surprise, however, Delia appeared at the entrance less than a minute later, an apologetic expression on her face. “Sorry to keep you waiting,” she gasped as she came to a stop from her hurried walk — the speediest she could move without looking like a peasant.

“No worries,” I said with a wave of my hand.

She turned to the guard. “It’s a scandal, how can you keep such a valuable guest of us waiting,” she admonished.

“But ... the Princess ordered that —“ he tried to argue, only to be cut off.

“I know what her Highness ordered,” she cut him off. “That doesn’t apply to honored guests,” she added before continuing with several choice admonishments, mixed with warnings and threats.

Good show, I thought even as I watched them, barely holding back a smirk. She was a good actress, I had to admit, but not enough to fool me.

“Sorry about that,” she murmured after finishing the punishment of the guard, and gestured me to walk. For a moment, she was silent, her hands dancing on her hair to deflect anxiety, trying to fix it.

Another part of her little ploy, I noted as I let my attention wander on her dress, which was ruffled and skewed, like she had put the dress on hurriedly. However, considering it enhanced the cleavage of the dress more than intended, but not enough to actually reach a level that could be defined as obscene.

Her beautiful blonde hair, damp and slightly mussed to give the impression that she just stepped out of a bath, sold the impression even better — despite the fact that a simple spell would have dried it properly.

Altogether, combined with her attitude, she sold the story of an enthusiastic greeting.

I had to admit, I was impressed by her attention to small details. Manipulation was much more effective through subtle details than grand declarations, and I could always respect a consummate professional.

Not enough to actually stop my own manipulations, of course.

As we walked, I made a show of glancing down her enhanced cleavage, blushing softly as I did so — which was hardly a chore as I enjoyed the delicious walk of the busty blonde while she made small talk.

“You weren’t around for a few days,” she finally broached the subject, slipping the question like it was just another casual comment.

“The demands of my boss, unfortunately,” I murmured, with an enhanced focus on the distaste, making her eyes brighten for a moment. “But with the recent attack, I had a lot of other things to deal with.”

“So unfair, making you work that hard,” Delia said, probing lightly.

“Someone in this school has to, or the place would collapse,” I countered arrogantly, adding another layer to the fake pompous personality I was selling to them. “If it wasn’t for my great wards, this place would have long collapsed under the weight of the undead.”

“They are lucky to have you to put things together,” Delia said with a sigh, as she grabbed my arm thankfully, and ‘accidentally’ dragging my arm until it was momentarily buried in her

glorious bosom before letting it go.

Nice touch.

“Yes, they are,” I said smugly. Though, it was ironic just how close my fake personality was taking credit for my actual achievements, yet somehow managing to disguise them as fake in the process. She nodded in agreement, but didn’t say anything else.

Because we have arrived at our destination. The research room they had prepared for me.

“You guys decided to go with the most expensive option, nice,” I murmured, not bothering to hide my shock as I said so. The research room they had set up for me was definitely opulent, extremely so, which almost felt me guilty for asking such a detailed request. It was just supposed to be an excuse to allow me to create my own wards, allowing a more throughout the observation of the Princess.

Though, having access to a well-equipped research room was much better than the alternative, especially since I was confident to block any magical observation they might leave in place.

“Nothing but the best for the best,” she said even as she rubbed my arm suggestively. “Her Highness ordered that everything that you require should be readied for you immediately, especially if it might achieve our goal faster.”

“Everything seems to be in order for the moment,” I said as I examined the room, including the mana-laden forge, several tables with supporting arrays to make the analysis easier, piles of materials — both monster parts and minerals — carefully categorized on shelves, tools forged from magical metals, and even a small box including three Mana Gems.

A truly impressive preparation. Just the materials were enough to bankrupt most families. Ironically, it was also a statement from them, saying that, even diminished, Crown Princess had access to deep and mysterious resources.

“How much do you think it would affect your projection,” she said, unable to hide her nervousness.

“Don’t worry, with all this, I’m confident that I could replicate it no more than two weeks of work, especially since my work will keep me in the school for a foreseeable future,” I said. If it wasn’t for the sudden appearance of the dragon, adding much more interesting leverage to apply against the headmistress, I would have used the opportunity to highlight just how unreasonable the headmistress’ requirements were, trying to use the Princess’ weight against

the headmistress.

“Oh, such good news,” she gasped in happiness as she hugged me. Her happiness was real, though, the seemingly impulsive move was certainly not, especially when she was doing her best to rub her chest against mine as she rocked up and down.

A move that had rather radical implications on the movement of her dress, making it slip lower and lower, until it gave a glimpse of her nipple, giving me an amazing view, and a notification.

[+100 Experience]

I tensed the moment I read the notification, while she stumbled back, a blush on her face, assuming that was a reaction to her nudity, which wasn't.

It was the reaction to the fact that I had received experience without any reduction, proving that her level was higher than mine!

It was shocking, because, the last time I had checked, she was only supposed to be level twenty, which was too low to give me experience.

So, either she managed to gain more than twelve levels in a few days, or I had fucked up my initial assessment greatly.

Either way, yet again, I found myself in a much more complicated deal than I expected.

“I'm so sorry,” she gasped as she tried to fix her dress in fake panic, messing it even more in the process, giving me an even better view of her naked tits for a fleeting moment. She even managed to stumble toward me in the process, forcing me to hold her to prevent her from a painful fall — pressing her naked tits against my chest in the process.

Unfortunately for her, it also gave me an excuse to slip another string of mana to her, allowing me to examine her soul space. I was lucky that she was busy giving me a show, giving me an excuse to look shocked.

I was shocked, because her soul space was markedly different.

She was not level twenty anymore, but thirty-five, a huge difference from before. But compared to other details, it was not even important. The fact that she had several more skills, or some stats were markedly higher was not shocking as well. The selection of the new skills, most magical and some crafting, while curious, wasn't entirely world-shaking, though almost as

suspicious as her sudden power-up.

What was shocking was the absence of skills that was there the previous time I had checked, like dagger skill, or sense motive. Similarly, some of the stats, like dexterity, were lower, and the whole distribution was completely skewed.

Yet another mystery, I thought even as she managed to fix her dress.

Like the situation wasn't complicated enough with angels, dragons, and mysterious organizations...

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[Level: 31 Experience: 493310 / 496000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6226 / 6324 Mana: 7750 / 7750 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]



Expert Craft [75/75]

## PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Sixty-Four

“So, what is your exact plan to repair the spear?” Delia asked, unaware of the groundbreaking, shocking detail I was trying to process after discovering her precious secret, or if she noticed, she had written it off as a reaction to her sudden hug. Though, when she kept her hand on my shoulder, her body close enough for my arm to rub against her chest, I started leaning toward the second case.

She was clearly using it to distract me further as I explained it.

Luckily, I had no problem using her strategy for my particular needs, especially with the System fueled by Divine Spark once more. I put my arm around her waist, equally casually, and pulled her closer against my body.

[+100 Experience]

“It’s going to be a complicated affair, are you sure you want to exhaust your pretty mind with such useless stuff,” I said patronizingly.

Considering she had acquired several magical skills just to receive a more accurate explanation, I doubted my deflection was something she wanted.

I had no idea the method she had used to increase her level in such a radical manner, even changing her skill configuration in the process, but I was certain that it didn’t have a trivial cost. If it had been easy, she wouldn’t have reduced her level.

“I know,” she murmured sensually, letting me hug her even tighter, showing her determination to use the seduction route, making it a delicious twist to my usual operating principle. “Still, Her Highness asked me to get a detailed explanation, and I can’t violate her orders. You wouldn’t let me get scolded, would you?”

“Of course not,” I said as I touched her chin gently, examining her pouty lips that formed a smile that begged for a long, lingering kiss. “It would be a pity for such a beautiful face to show sadness.”

My flirty sentence didn’t affect her in any way, of course, as I delivered it deliberately badly. A little pause between words and a slightly misaligned emphasis was all that needed to destroy the charm of a cute sentence.

She reacted as it did. “Thanks, you’re my savior,” she said, exaggerating even more.

Meanwhile, her fingers were dancing on my arm softly, selling the idea of closeness. I leaned forward just to test her, curious how far she would push herself.

She waited until inches separated our lips before turning her head, letting that kiss land on her cheek, a convincing seductive smile on her face, promising much more in a near future. Of course, I had no doubt that that near future would turn to a nebulous destination that would get far away more and more.

A true challenge.

“Of course I am,” I said, pushing my chest proudly, leaning hard on the pompous, vain personality I had created for them. “I’m always the best.”

“So, about the way you would repair the spear?” she asked.

“Well, it’s not a final strategy, as the new tools give me some interesting options I need to consider,” I murmured. “However, the core strategy is similar. First, I need to align the fragments of its internal arrays...” I started, giving a complicated explanation, once again relying on a lot of obscure theories just like I had done before, but this time, I tried to be as accurate as possible.

Unlike the last time, she had the skills to understand what I was talking about, forcing me to be even more careful. I didn’t have the option to blame her for misunderstanding some basic concepts, or lacking fundamentals.

Not that it was a big problem for me. It would have taken me less than five minutes to concisely explain every single detail, but one thing stopped me from doing so. I noticed a slight tightening on the corner of her mouth, suggesting she was feeling a strain.

Maybe maintaining those high levels was even harder than I assumed.

So, rather than going directly, I deliberately kept the explanation long-winded, mixed with long breaks where I bragged pointlessly about my own genius to kill even more time. She asked me clarifying questions, but they didn’t help her as much as she hoped.

Posing as a pompous, self-absorbed idiot with the sensibility of an unwashed piece of rock worked wonders in the current situation.

I didn’t waste that time, of course. Even as I explained, I started walking around the room, checking and testing the tools, though I avoided paying attention to the wards, not to her

presence.

However, even as I examined the tools, most of my attention was on her. I observed her throughout my explanation, watching the outward signals of her tenseness to understand how the strain was affecting her.

When we hit an hour mark, and she was still listening without an explicit attempt to stop me, I decided that whatever she was using could easily last hours, though whether she could last more than a day was hard to guess.

[+700 Experience]

Her occasional flashes of skin bequeathed me with experience kept the long-winded explanation entertaining, at least for me. I was tempted to push for more experience, at least more than glances on her intentional flashes and casual touches, as I had missed the sensation of rapid leveling,

“I think that’s enough,” she said as she stood up, declaring her surrender against my delaying tactics. I wondered whether the strain of the process or the boringness of my bragging finally broke her patient resistance.

“But I was just going to explain how I solved the interference problem between rotating arrays when —“ I said, doing my best to look disappointed. The expression of shock on her face was very amusing.

“No need!” she answered in panic, only to realize her mistake when she noticed my — fake — frown. “I mean, I need to talk with the princess, and your explanations are more than enough to satisfy her. We can talk later.”

And with that, she left, but not before hugging me one last time, and whispering her thanks.

I was tempted to follow her, curious about the mystery behind her sudden power-up, but I was surrounded by too many wards to make sneaking away from a viable option. Staying hidden was much hidden when people didn’t simply dismiss my presence as a servant.

Luckily, I had a lot of things to go, I thought even as I grabbed a magical chisel, using it to get a sliver of metal from the spear.

[-63 Mana]

I had enhanced the strength behind my hit with a spell, because there was no chance that wards in the room weren't examining my activities, one way or another. And even if there was none, there was no harm in acting safely.

Then, I threw the metal sliver into an alchemical crucible, throwing as much as fire mana the item could handle to melt it, so that I could properly analyze its material composition.

[-430 Mana]

Using almost a thousand mana in the process was excessive, aggressively so, but it wasn't something I had decided randomly. No, it was the perfect excuse to fill the room with my own mana, which gave me an innocent reason to directly interact with the wards without alerting them.

And just like that, I started a combined analysis session, splitting my attention between examining the nature of the wards that surrounded the room very thoroughly along with the alchemical analysis of the structure of the metal of the spear.

Neither task was simple, and together, they were enough to strain my Intelligence and Wisdom to the limit. Especially since I was analyzing the wards, again and again, to make sure I had missed nothing critical. Minutes turned into hours, and I started sweating.

[-1291 Mana]

For once, it wasn't a fake reaction.

Luckily, it wasn't a waste. In terms of analyzing the nature of the spear, I had made significant progress, especially identifying the nature of the metal that had been used. While it wasn't complete, I was confident I could create some more of that magical alloy.

Unfortunately, the same luck didn't apply to the wards around the room. It seemed that, by using the excuse of creating the best room I requested, they had used an impressive number of wards to check the room. Voice detection, mana sensitivity, movement... Some were there to make sure the spear was never removed from the room, the others designed to observe the movement of the occupants, each designed with several redundancies.

It didn't mean they were unbreakable, of course. I could dismantle them in less than an hour without triggering any of the embedded traps, but it wouldn't work if there was anyone that was actively observing the room.

Simply brute-forcing would have been easier.

When the end of the day reached, I felt a touch annoyed about the waste of time. The great number of equipment reduced the time I needed to analyze the spear, but not as much as it would have been if I was able to freely spend my mana without alerting my observers.

Especially since it was my request that forced me into this situation.

Still, it was not a complete waste, as the mysterious condition of my escort was much more interesting to resolve. I opened the door and gestured to the guard. "I'm almost finished. Can you call Lady Delia so I can give her a report?"

"As you wish, sir," the guard said and walked away, leaving me with anticipation. However, a minute later, the guard had returned, a stiff expression on his face. "I'm sorry sir, but it seems that Lady Delia has to join a very important meeting, but I had been informed that she would love to have lunch tomorrow."

I just nodded as I followed the guard outside, wondering whether it was just a seduction ploy, maintaining the distance, or she was dealing with the aftermath of her power-up.

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[Level: 31 Experience: 494110 / 496000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6226 / 6324 Mana: 7750 / 7750 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Sixty-Five

With the little game with the princess over, I decided to pay a visit to my favorite blacksmith, not just to have a detailed discussion with her about today's findings and possible ways to optimize tools to store Divine Spark, but also to finally add her as a companion.

Our relationship had progressed significantly from the days I was afraid that achievement might alert her that I wasn't completely normal. At this point, even discounting the physical aspect of our relationship, I was her only reliable ally. Also, more importantly, I finally had enough Divine Spark to actually fuel the companion process.

I still had doubts whether Divine Spark was actually fueling it, or it was a complicated trick to force me to work for the System, but that was an issue for a future time.

At this point, sneaking through Hall of Crafting was trivial, especially since the place was crawling with unfamiliar faces, helping the usual workers. After the battle, the school required a lot of supplies, weapons, potions, and much other stuff.

When I arrived at the warehouse deep underground that Oeyne appropriated as her residence, I was already smiling with anticipation. With a flick of my wrist, I opened the door, revealing the beautiful, caramel-skinned beauty on the other side of the door, busy scribbling something on her work desk.

When she turned to check the door, she was alarmed. Understandable, as the feeling of losing the protections around one's residence wasn't a comfortable feeling, but her fear was replaced by a coy smile when she has noticed it was me who broke in.

I said nothing, just smiled as I walked forward, enjoying her enthusiastic expression even as the door slammed behind me.

"Hey," she murmured as I stood next to her.

I was planning to focus on her body, to jumpstart the fun process of improving the Companion Process, when the designs on the table caught my attention, one, for some reason, felt very familiar, but I failed to pin the exact source. "What's this?" I asked.

"Just another order from the Princess," she grumbled in annoyance. "They have a lot of harebrained designs they want me to work on. They have too much time and money on their hand if they want to waste my time with those."



“Are they that bad?” I asked even as I cycled through her designs, trying to pin why it was feeling that familiar. And the fact I wasn’t able to pin the source of the familiarity despite my System-boosted Intelligence was weird.

“Technically, no,” Oeyne admitted. “As far as I could see, the theory behind them is solid, but their initial assumptions for those designs are simply ridiculous. It simply assumes a very different environment. It’s like assuming rocks are replaced by air. Most of the designs are too fragile, simply leaking mana.”

“How interesting,” I whispered. “And do they want you to fix the leaking issue?”

“That’s the interesting part, no. They want me to ignore the leaking issues, and focus on other aspects.”

“And how many of those designs have you completed for our glorious princess?”

“A few,” she gasped, which might be about the sharp nature of my voice. Although, it might be also about my wandering hand, landing on her shoulder. A subtle, gentle touch, but I didn’t blame her for reacting with a gasp. Not with her previous experience, well aware of how it would progress.

“Be more accurate, sweetie,” I murmured even as my fingers slid down. “You’re an artisan, I expect you to be more accurate.”

She paused for a second, her breathing getting labored, though it was more excitement than nervousness, her impressive bosom swelling even more. While she considered the question, my hands cupped the fullness of her breasts, softly squeezing them.

“They have given me a lot of initial designs, hundreds,” she answered even as my fingers found her nipples, teasing them slowly. “However, most of those designs have similarity, a dozen or so categories if we group the similar ones.”

“Interesting,” I said as alternated between mauling her breasts and teasing her nipples, interrupting her explanation with moans. “And you have delivered any result to them?”

“Just the initial conjecture, nothing useful. Not that any of them could be used in the first place.”

“Never do that again without talking to me,” I whispered in a playful yet threatening tone. With the mysterious levels Delia gained, I would prefer to maintain control of the information flow, just in case. She nodded. “Good,” I whispered.

I could have asked her more questions about the design, but I decided against it. It was clear that Oeyne was treating them as a thought experiment, suggesting she didn't have any worthwhile conclusions. More importantly, I was on the edge of leveling up, which would make it much easier to analyze those designs.

And, speaking of leveling up... "Though, it still leaves your punishment..." I growled softly even as I waved my hand, once again creating a set of magical chains that wrapped around her limbs from the silver ingots lying around, and forcing her to fall on her knees.

[-782 Mana]

"You're a harsh taskmaster—" she gasped, unable to hide her enthusiasm before I silenced her, with the appropriate motion of sliding my shaft into her beautiful mouth.

The dance of her tongue around it was simply heavenly, especially since I was feeling backed up after the extended, yet ultimately fruitless sexy massage sessions with the dragon, my new mistress.

I watched in enjoyment as Oeyne started working on my shaft, well aware of how to handle it well after our repeated fun adventures. I wrapped my fist around the base of my cock, pumping up and down, giving her momentary help.

Not for long, of course, as my hand soon moved forward, sliding through her thick hair instead before I pulled her closer, forcing her to devour more of it than she could immediately handle. Her resulting groans were simply delicious.

Meanwhile, I pulled my dagger with my empty hand, using it to slice her top off. Someone else might have reacted in fear, but Oeyne reacted to my aggression with increased enthusiasm with growing excitement. When she looked up, her chocolate eyes shining with desire, I met her gaze with a roguish smile, even as I cast a spell to disintegrate her leather pants and boots, leaving her panties as the only piece of clothing responsible for hiding her busty body.

And with her growing wetness, her panties hardly a paragon of effectiveness.

Oeyne continued her devouring, her hips parting to the limit as she struggled to take the whole length, the crown invading her tight throat. Her eyes widened as she pulled on the chains that were holding her motionless, failing to react against my forceful yet welcome treatment, moaning happily as her throat was forced to take it completely.

"Take a deep breath, and just keep swallowing," I whispered, my grin widening each passing

second as the pleasure reached a new level. I could have continued until it reached a delicious conclusion, but that would mean I was missing a valuable opportunity to progress the companion process more.

[-64 Mana]

A simple spell was enough to change the alignment of the chains, until Oeyne was prone, floating at waist level as the chains held her up, providing me with the spectacular angle enjoy to partake the feast her beautiful body represented.

My grin widened further as I positioned myself behind her, ready to slip inside, her plump ass pointing at the ceiling. A stiff tug was enough to rip her panties, leaving her entrance naked.

She struggled against her chains, her moans mixing into the cracks of the conjured chains, forcing me to reinforce them to keep her. Once again, she was happy to be chained, but only if I could actually keep her chained with my own abilities.

[-591 Mana]

“Such a needy slut,” I whispered as I spanked her ass with my hand, earning a delicious moan. “Maybe I should punish you before the main event.”

“No —” she gasped in shock, desire dripping down her voice, only to be interrupted as I conjured a ball gag on her pretty mouth, silencing her complaint.

My hand landed on her ass in a spank once more, and she flinched in desire, her wetness getting even thicker.

“Feel free to tell me if you have any complaints,” I mockingly even as I grabbed another piece of metal before flooding it with my mana, converting it to a paddle, and impressing Oeyne with the increase of my skills in the process. There was no harm in impressing her with my abilities, especially since their fascination seemed to impact Companion Process progression significantly.

[-318 Mana]

The newly-created paddle landed on a beautiful, plump ass, leaving a small bruise despite her spectacular Endurance. Even as she moaned, she tried to use her own mana to break her chains, only to fail spectacularly against the potency of my mana. She might be more skilled than me, but in a direct magical confrontation, she had no choice of victory.

Though, if the excitement in her muffled moans was any indicator, she clearly didn't mind the rough treatment, enjoying her submissiveness. Not for the first time, I wondered she always had her submissive tendencies, or she developed them only after she had passed the level-twenty mark. It would have been ironic if the latter was the case, realizing that she had gotten off by physically dominated only after her physical abilities reached a point that made it nearly impossible.

After all, to dominate someone, it wasn't enough to just be stronger than someone. One needed to be stronger by a wide margin, especially counting her blacksmithing expertise, making most of the magical items useless as well — even if someone risked the destruction of an expensive magical item just for a night of fun in the first place.

“You're so lucky I'm here to give you what you want,” I whispered as I caressed her ass gently before another spank landed. “Are you ready for the main event?”

With her gag, she was only able to let out a muffled moan, but it was clearly a yes.

“Excellent,” I murmured as I positioned myself to her entrance, ready to slide in...

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[Level: 31 Experience: 494110 / 496000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6226 / 6324 Mana: 6923 / 7750 ]

SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

Expert Craft [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Sixty-Six

The sight of her beautiful, plump, heart-shaped ass, the light bouncing off from her caramel skin, was simply too beautiful to resist for a long time, especially for denying myself the pleasure for such a long time — a couple of days might as well be an eternity as well as my standards were concerned.

“Hmm,” I murmured despite the temptation, rubbing the head of my shaft against her entrance as I stretched that syllable. “Maybe we should stop. After all, you’re tired after working on the designs for such a long time.”

The gag in her mouth prevented her from saying anything, but it was impossible to mistake the need echoing in her muffled cry.

I was tempted to tease her more, but not as tempted to feel her presence around me as I enter. “Loud and clear,” I said with a chuckle as I rubbed my presence against her entrance once more, her moans rising unbidden to match, creating a delicious symphony. “It’s time for the fun to begin,” I said, warning her one last time as I plunged inside her, mercilessly hard.

Just the way she liked.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 12%]

My smile widened, though, as delicious as the way she tightened around me as I pushed, the physical aspects played a limited part in it. The sense of improvement was nice, dispelling the growing fear that things were getting too dangerous for me to handle.

With enough power, nothing was too difficult to handle.

My hips quickened, filling the room with the sound of our flesh colliding, each slam echoing against the walls. And since her body was still being held by the floating chains, each slam making her swing like a pendulum, her body dancing deliciously.

She moaned even as I slapped her ass, enhancing her moans even more, forcing the limits of the gag that was supposed to keep her silent. “So loud,” I said even as I quickened my pace even further, uncaring of the loudness of her moans. After all, we were in her room, which was safely reinforced the walls enough to act as a fortress if needed.

Even then, some of her moans were actually loud enough to make me wonder.

Not enough to actually make me stop, of course. I continued slamming into her delicious entrance, enjoying her absolute lack of struggle as she accepted my assault — which was a rarity in her case, showing she had missed my touch greatly as well, regardless of the little passed time. Even my spanks, getting hard enough to leave a lingering redness despite her endurance, were only earning louder moans.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 15%]

It was time for a change of position. I started walking toward her bedroom, a task that was much easier by the floating chains that tied her up, pumping hard into her with each step. Soon, she was shivering beautifully with every touch.

Only when we arrived at her bedroom I waved my hand, and her chains floated down, slow enough for her to position her legs, allowing her to balance herself on her knees rather than landing directly. I also loosened her gag, finally allowing her to speak.

“Yes, harder, faster,” she growled, showing that she was already lost in pleasure. “I’m so close!”

In another situation, I would have slowed down, torturing her with an orgasm that refused to arrive, but I was feeling too explosive to delay it, not when I was burning with a similar desire. I still pulled out of her, just enough to make her give a quick, burning whisper of begging before I plunged back, making her shift back to her wordless moans.

However, as I returned the task, I grabbed the remaining chains, which were connected to her arms, pulling back. It forced her body to rise even as her arms bent back, her tits jiggling beautifully with each pump of my hips.

“It’s fun to take the occasional break from work, isn’t it,” I asked even as I pulled her back even harder, her delicious cries quick to mix in.

“Only if — every break feels this way,” she managed to answer, but not without her moans interrupting her words.

“Well, that can be arranged,” I whispered. “Of course, it requires some more obedience from your end.”

“For what, exactly?” she managed to ask, showing that, even while drowning in pleasure, she wasn’t about to declare her unrestricted loyalty to me.

Not yet, at least.

“Nothing too exhausting or arduous,” I said even as I used my free hand to grab her freely-dangling tits, sinking into their large, generous expanse, triggering another beautiful moan in the process. “Well, for the other activities, of course...”

“That works,” she managed to main even as she started to shudder, the climax she was waiting for finally hitting her wildly. She gasped and moaned, shuddering under the effects of an earthquake.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 19%]

Still, just because I wasn't in the mood to torture her with a delayed orgasm didn't mean that I tease her the other ways. Before she could recover from the aftereffects, I untied her hands before flipping her, her beautiful tits pointing to the ceiling. Then, I slipped inside her once more.

“So, about what I need from you,” I said even as I started moving once more, enjoying her tightness even as I tried to come up with the best way to deepen our partnership. Luckily, I wasn't starting from scratch, which gave me a reasonable basis. We were already cooperating against the Princess and her mysterious requests — though, the latest visit had suggested we might need to adjust our strategy in that area — and I was essentially her supervisor as far as her dependency on the school was concerned, easily replacing the importance of the contact that arranged her stay in the first place.

“Yes,” she moaned even as I grabbed her legs and raised them to my shoulder, giving me an even more amazing angle into her core.

“I need a tighter cooperation from you,” I said, before adding with a chuckle. “Not that anyone could blame you for not being tight.”

“You're such a charmer,” she said, which was impressive as she somehow managed to sound sarcastic between her moans of pleasure. Her attitude earned a painful nipple twist, which she enjoyed even more.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 21%]

“I need you to coordinate with me much tighter, and don't do anything with the Princess without checking with me. She's very complicated.”

“More complicated than being a royal that was effectively deposed from her position, hunted by her family, and desperate enough to take very dangerous risks?” she asked.



“Yes,” I said with a stern tone. “There’s something mysterious about her, raising much bigger complications than I expected. Those designs and the weapon she wants us to forge is clearly a small part of her plan.”

“Do you know —“ she started before a moan interrupted her. “Do you know what’s her final objective?”

“Not yet. However, I had a feeling that whatever she’s trying to do, it’s not simple and pedestrian as just trying to take back her throne.”

I could see a question appear on her face, mixing into her pleasure, no doubt curious about my exact line of thinking, but instead, she chose to ask a simpler question. “Should I try to sabotage her?” she asked.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 24%]

“No,” I said. “While she has a hidden agenda, there’s no evidence that it’ll harm us, and she has a good relationship with the headmistress. Until I could discover her objective, we need to cooperate. Just make sure to inform me about everything they want, no matter how trivial it seems, like a few theoretical designs that could not be used at all.”

She nodded, showing her acceptance without even uttering a word, though her mouth opened for a fleeting second, signaling an aborted question. And I doubted it was because her curiosity was sated. Not with her body getting tighter and tighter around me.

She wasn’t the only one that was getting closer to the edge. One last moan of her was enough to trigger my climax as well.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 25% - First Stage Completed +5000 Exp]

Level UP!

[Select one of the following skills: Grandmaster Arcana, Master Craft, Master Speech]

“And here’s your reward for working so well,” I murmured even as I tightened my grip around her hips, marking her insides. “Do you like your achievement?”

“H-how?” she murmured, the shock managing to find a place for itself even on her face, drowning in pleasure.

“A gentleman needs a few secrets to keep things interesting, ” I said with a smirk. “But did you

really think that I would leave your loyalty without a reward?"

"O-of course not," she managed to stammer, but I could see the shock dancing on her face, one that surprised me for a moment until I could process it. After helping Helga and others not only get achievements but also level up repeatedly, I was used to getting underwhelming reactions.

Even a miracle turned ordinary after enough repetition.

I gave her a moment to gather herself, allowing her to process the shock and maintain her shock at the same time, while I picked my newest skill. And since I was not ready to commit the next five levels to one particular skill, even one as useful as Arcana, I chose Craft, to bring my production to the next level.

After all, I still had to craft a lot of things.

I turned my attention back to the busty caramel beauty, panting helplessly in front of me, trying to decide between the merits of improving my newest skill and focusing back to her treatment, to see whether I had managed to impress her suitably enough to clear two more stages of Companion Process, which, combined with the experience reward, would bring me at the edge of the next level...

However, before I could make a decision, I had received a magical message from a certain scaly acquaintance, delivered by the wards of the school, asking for me to prepare a meal for her.

"That's enough excitement for today," I said as I looked at Oeyne, caressing her cheeks softly. "You should focus on using your power-up. I'll visit you again tomorrow," I said before turning and leaving.

I had a dragon to serve.

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 7921 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [75/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Sixty-Seven

A touch of annoyance stirred in my heart even as I stepped into the tunnel that was under the control of the headmistress' precious dark wards. The fact that it was a part of my plan wasn't enough to completely dismiss the sting of being summoned like a servant.

The fact that it stopped me from enjoying the extended embrace of a busty blacksmith hardly helped to maintain my mood.

I knocked on the door, but there was no response. However, I could sense her mana moving behind the door, with no attempt to keep it hidden. On the contrary, her casting was more obvious than the usual, as if she wanted me to detect her behind the door.

Yet the door stayed closed.

A transparent attempt to exert her power. But like most direct applications of authority, or like sexy underwear, just because it was transparent didn't mean that it was useless. I waited silently for five minutes before a spell finally hit on the door, opening it.

When I entered, I found her still in her human form, lying on a reclining chair. Still short, with her emerald hair bright enough to get all the attention if it wasn't for her deliciously amazing curves, the only thing that was different was her clothing, wearing some kind of short nightie rather than a dress.

If it wasn't for her beauty, I would have been much less willing to play along with her little games.

"How can I help you, mistress?" I said, but made sure to add a slightly mocking tone, reminding her that, ultimately, I was just playing around rather than being intimidated into service.

Sometimes, it was easier to act truly servile, waiting until it was the time to lash out and defeat the enemy. However, the current situation was certainly not one of those, not with the power inequality of our initial meetings, saving her from certain death twice. The

She didn't miss that particular detail if her cute frown was any indicator. "I'm hungry, prepare some food for me," she said, her tone excessively dismissive.

"As you wish, mistress?" I asked. "Any preference? Maybe some steak?"

"Something lighter. After spending that much time in the wilderness, I'm not in the mood for

something heavy.”

“How about a salad, maybe some steamed vegetables?” I asked, only to receive a shocked gaze.

“What are you talking about,” she muttered in shock, and no small amount of anger. “Salad, vegetables? Do I look like a cow to you?”

I smirked sardonically, realizing that my menu idea was not exactly well-thought-out. Clearly, vegetables were hardly the most appealing food for a dragon. “Maybe some nice braised dire chicken, then?” I asked. “And some spices to give a nice aroma.”

“Maybe,” she said, then her smirk widened, like she was about to deliver a dangerous blow. “But I want you to cook it here, yourself, I can’t trust the servants here. What if there were spies, and use the opportunity to poison me.”

It wasn’t a particularly good reason. The existence of spies was not in doubt, but it was very unlikely for those spies to be aware of her presence. And even if they were aware of her presence and determined to take her down, I doubted that poisoning would be the first method.

I had a feeling that poisoning a dragon wouldn’t be a simple task.

I didn’t bother explaining that, of course, not when her smirk told me all I needed to know. It was clearly an excuse to force me to do some menial work.

Jokes on her. Of all the things she could ask me to do using the headmistress as an excuse, cooking wouldn’t even earn a place on the list of annoyances. It didn’t bother me at all, not when I had to prepare my own meals for a long while, especially after I started leveling up.

I didn’t tell her that, of course, instead of letting her think that she had pulled one over me. “As you wish, mistress,” I said with a resigned tone. “Just let me go and pick some supplies first.”

“Sure, go ahead,” she said, waving her hand dismissively, which did some nice things to her skimpy nightie. “But don’t dawdle too much, I’m feeling famished.”

The supply trip didn’t last long since I didn’t bother talking with anyone, but directly arrived at the storage and took all the ingredients and equipment I needed. I could have used the headmistress’ orders to get them officially, however, but it would be like shouting to the spies in the school that was something extraordinary going on.

And when I knocked on her door, once again, she kept me waiting, which made her tactic even

more amusing and childish, making me actually chuckle. And when the door finally opened, the sight that was revealed was certainly enough to compensate.

She was still wearing the same nightie, but her legs were crossed, her body leaning forward a bit to enhance her beautiful cleavage even further.

I still remembered the sensation of dragging my fingers on her soft skin.

“Mistress,” I said with a nod, making a point not to linger my gaze on her body, not giving her the attention she clearly desired.

Instead, I moved to the corner, a couple of spells and a ward enough to create a temporary kitchen. I started cooking, which was a smooth process thanks to my Craft skill, which didn't only help me to create very useful weapons but also prepare meals.

Once again, generalist skills for the win.

I started whistling as my knife danced over the meat, mixing the pieces with a spice mixture rapidly, even as the ward structure replicated an oven and started to warm up to the correct degree.

However, I wasn't just mixing the meat with the spices. Instead, I was carefully coating every single one with a great amount of mana carefully, not only increased the magic it contained, but also carefully enhanced the flavor packed in it, something that I was able to do before making the meat explode, only because my Tantric ability allowing me to keep mana smooth and calm even outside my body.

[-842 Mana]

A costly activity. Pity that the wards blocked the System from improving my skills, as it would have been a nice bonus along with the delicious smell that filled the room.

However, as I cooked, I heard the distinct sound of fabric being pulled off. A soft, suggestive sound, one that tempted me to look back, but I kept my attention on the preparation. The sound was too loud, too stretched out to be anything but accidental, a part of her teasing.

The sigh of annoyance that followed certainly confirmed that assumption.

She followed that with another spell, her mana signature distinct, before footsteps started to move toward me, sauntering slowly, until she was directly behind me. Still, I didn't look at her

until she actually leaned against my body.

“It smells nice,” she murmured even as her breasts rubbed against my back, her voice soft, suggestive. “You’re a better cook than I expected. Maybe I should actually take you back with me as my servant,” she added, teasing and mocking me at the same time.

And I had to admit, it was working despite the brief respite I had earned thanks to Oeyne. “That’s not possible, unfortunately,” I murmured, but only after a reasonable pause, one that implied that the determination behind my words wasn’t as strong as the words implied.

I had no idea to truly be her servant, of course, but giving her the impression that it was possible wouldn’t hurt. She would try to impress me, which would come with a lot of relevant information about the world that was not under the control of the system.

“I see,” she murmured as she shifted a bit, standing next to me. Only then did I let my gaze drop toward her, getting the first glimpse of her changed clothing. Her negligee was gone, replaced by a tight dress. It was longer than her negligee, reaching to her knees, but its tightness was more than enough to compensate for the loss of sexiness.

Together with the generous cleavage, she was very beautiful, but that prevent her from looking furious I barely paid her a glance before turning my attention back to cooking, carefully infusing more mana into the water I used to braise the meat.

[-381 Mana]

“You’re wasting a lot of mana,” she commented as she watched me slowly infuse the water with more and more, which, unlike directly reinforcing the meat, was going to be set aside as leftover, while the mana slowly evaporated away.

“That’s the quirk of cooking,” I answered. “If you want to make a delicious dish, you need to be willing to waste a lot of mana.” This was technically correct, but that didn’t change the fact that the mana-intensive cooking technique was my own invention, merging Tantric and Craft on the fly.

No one else had used such a technique before to my knowledge, which wasn’t as surprising as it might sound. First, I doubted there were more chefs that had a mana pool reaching four digits in the first place, which was requisite for the technique. Then, those chefs would require a significant Arcana skill, assisted by some very complicated wards to compensate for Tantric — which I suspected something unique to my own situation, as I failed to discover any similar skills in my studies.

Even if it wasn't a unique skill, it was likely rare enough that there was not a chef that had it.

Still, even more importantly, there were very few people that could actually eat such a mana-intensive dish without exploding, and even less that could actually extract the slightest benefit. Even most efficient mana recovery potions were little more than a wasteful luxury, dedicated for the usage of low-leveled rich scions rather than actually used in battles. Most of it was about people's inability to efficiently consume external mana.

The only exception, was the sexy dragon next to me, doing her best to get my attention without being too obvious. Her ability to directly extract mana from things she consumed, which, by her own admission, was the only thing that kept her alive without the System and the mana regeneration it provided.

She was the only one that could really appreciate the complicated dish I was about to finish preparing, after one last touch.

[-925 Mana]

Again, I had used a lot of mana, but this time, it wasn't just to maximize the taste of the meal I had prepared. I had used the opportunity to attach some of it to her dress, one that would allow me to apply some mischievous tricks.

"Your dinner is ready, mistress," I said. "Shall we move to the table?"

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 6139 / 8000 ]

SKILLS



Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Sixty-Eight

“Let’s see if the food tastes good enough to justify all the effort,” the dragon said as she turned, and walked toward the dinner table, not bothering to hide the seductive sway around her hips, creating a beautiful sight.

She certainly deserved some assistance, I decided even as I leveraged the stray piece of mana I had connected to her dress earlier, ready to unravel her magically conjured clothes. Of course, rather than destroying it immediately, I started examining it first. I needed to make it look like it was her mistake, and to do that, I needed to understand the nature of her magical craft. It was a simple affair...

Or at least, it was supposed to be, but the moment I focused on the details, I met with a completely unfamiliar magical structure. It was supposed to be a little fun prank, only to come to a hard stop as I took a deeper peek into the construction principles. It was a very complicated, elegant design, showing an interesting combination of crafting and mana manipulation, displaying an expertise that wasn’t often found in people who relied on the System.

However, the elegance wasn’t the source of my confusion.

No, it was the complete uselessness of it. The mana strings and wards that created the dress were impressively complicated, but there was a point in crafting or casting that such elegant detail stopped being helpful, and started being harmful instead, threatening the stability of the construct.

It was about the natural movement of mana. Similar to water, mana had a tendency to evaporate, and even tricks applied to the construction of the wards only slowed that down. Of course, it was not a challenge for wards, as their natural spending far surpassed the natural evaporation, but even with a source, going below a certain size was unsustainable. Yet, the mana strings of her dress were far below that practical limit.

Of course, it was just a dress with no magical benefits, no additional protection, or magical enchantment, creating such a complicated design wasn’t too magically intensive, and it could be refreshed easily. Not that it explained why she was deliberately using an inferior design.

I wanted to dismiss that track of thought, but it was making my brain itch, telling me that I was missing something obvious. It was a very unfamiliar sensation with my skills and stats. I was used to connecting discrete topics very easily.

Pity I couldn't just maintain the connection with the little mana I had left attached to her dress for long without making her suspicious. And despite the elegance of its structure, finding a core node that would destabilize the whole dress hadn't been too difficult. I destroyed it, and pulled my mana senses back.

The dress didn't immediately disintegrate, of course, that wouldn't be fun. However, I could see a few pieces of fabric losing substance around the skirt, getting slightly transparent.

Excellent, I thought even as I continued to follow her swaying hips, leaving the mysterious nature of the clothes to the side for the moment. Though, as her skirt got shorter, revealing more of her beautiful, if short, legs. When she arrived at the table, I was quick to pull her chair, which allowed me to get a glimpse of her beautiful cleavage.

Her back arched as she sat down, a movement that was too exaggerated to be accidental, enhancing her cleavage even more. "I hope you enjoy your dinner, mistress," I said as I pulled to the side, once again using the same exaggerated tone servant tone, not letting her forget that I was only playing around.

I was expecting her to enjoy the food I had created. My crafting skills, combined with a very generous amount of mana to serve the special preferences of a dragon, were not something to be dismissed.

However, I certainly didn't expect her eyes to close as a moan of pleasure, the kind that I was used to hearing in a different context, escaped her beautiful lips. She trembled erotically, which made her even more attractive, tempting me to abandon my role.

Her eyes jerked open soon after, showing that I wasn't the only one that was surprised by her reaction.

I could have teased her about that, of course, but with her dress slowly unraveling, I had a better idea. "Good try teasing me," I said, which was a touch excessive.

"Y-yeah," she stammered, happy to take my excuse. "I was just teasing you."

"I can tell with the way you're playing with your dress," I answered, pointing at the right side, where a piece had already gone. The way her eyes widened was beautiful.

"R-right!" she stammered even as her gaze turned down, noticing her dress was suffering smaller.

She raised her hand, but before she could cast a spell, I spoke once again. “Too bad you won’t be able to stay like that for too long. You’ll get scared and fix it back, making it pointless posturing.”

“I never get scared,” she said as she slammed her hand to the table — which only survived thanks to the numerous enchantments weaved into its nature. Her vehemence at the mention of getting scared surprised me. Maybe I had managed to touch a soft spot.

“Oh, really. Then why don’t you show it by not casting a spell until you finished the great dinner I had prepared for you.”

“That’s nothing, of course, but why should I let you do it.”

I could have raised the favors she owed me, goaded her into a bet, or start flirting. I chose none of those options. “Hey, if you want to be a coward, go ahead and be one. You don’t need an excuse.”

Her response was to throw a knife, which I deflected using a magical shield.

[-483 Mana]

“Hey, be careful,” I said, panicked. Of course, it was also fake, and I used such a strong magical shielding because I wanted to refresh my connection to her dress, and not just to quicken the speed of her dress’ disintegration.

I also wanted to continue examining the spell structure of her dress, trying to understand why I was finding it familiar.

“Don’t call me that,” she said, her eyes glowing even brighter, its green taking a threatening sheen.

“Sheesh, overreaction much?” I asked, but didn’t push her any harder on that aspect. Her strength certainly was not a joke.

She said nothing else, just took another bite of the food. I noted that this time, it was much bigger. Combined with the speed of her chewing, I could see it was less about her fascination with the food, and more about wanting to finish it quicker, so that she could resolve the issue with her dress without eating her own words. Unfortunately for her, there was a big flaw in her choice.

The orgasmic joy of eating.

As she ate her food hurriedly, it impacted her even harder. To her credit, she managed to suppress her shivers, and most of her moans, the remaining subtle enough to be disguised as the reaction for good food.

Unfortunately, her body decided to disagree with her decision to keep things hidden. Her nipples started to get harder, pushing against the tight fabric of her dress — a view not helped by the slowly disintegrating fabric of her dress.

I managed to control the disintegration partially, directing the disintegration to safe spots, arms, shoulders, stomach, and the lower sections of her skirt.

I wasn't onset by a sudden invasion of charitable feelings, certainly not against a beautiful natural disaster like her. But I could see that the safer spots were already pushing her limits, and I didn't want her escaping from the table before she finished her food.

"Make sure to finish your food," I reminded her. "Because the mana will evaporate in a few minutes?"

"Why?" she asked.

"What do you mean, why?" I asked, surprised by her question.

Her gaze was equally confused. "I mean why the mana would evaporate that quickly, of course," she said.

Then, something clicked in my mind. The weirdly flimsy nature of her enchantments that could only last for a few hours, her shock at the possibility that the food would not be able to contain that much mana for long. Even the designs I had noticed on Oeyne's room flashed in my view, more similar to her dress than anything outside.

"It's because of the System, naturally," I answered with a certain tone, even though it was more of a guess than certainty. My hands were bound by the fact that I couldn't be honest about my lack of knowledge.

However, it wasn't baseless under the assumption that the System wasn't just connected to people, but also this section of the world in general, somehow affecting it. Together with the clear difference of free mana that was available that she had been complaining about, and the fact that a magical construct she had created habitually was too flimsy to survive under the

mana evaporation — something I had written off as a natural phenomenon — I was pretty confident in my guest.

It certainly explained why the designs I found in Oeyne's workshop had been so weird that I was willing to write them off as impossible to work.

There was one important question. Why did it take me that long to actually connect the dots?

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

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Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 7838 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

## PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Sixty-Nine

“How interesting,” she murmured as she tried to process my revelation. “I didn’t expect that abominable thing to affect everything to such a degree.”

I appreciated her mutterings, because it gave me a chance to gather my thoughts, in particular the System’s constant mana devouring and its applications to creating Enchantments. Not permanently, of course, as I had no doubt those implications were not just limited to wards and items, nor it was something I could treat as a long-term, theoretical question thanks to the designs I had noticed in Oeyne’s rooms.

All I wanted was a few days where I could tease a sexy dragon and a repressed angel for fun. Was that so much to ask?

However, I managed to pull myself away from those more complicated questions as she took another bite of the food, losing herself in a literal magical culinary bliss, trembling beautifully, her hurry to finish it faster leaving her even more vulnerable against the invasion of pleasure.

And since I had gone all that effort to reconnect with her dress, a flare of my magic ensured that its destruction quickened even further, to a point that it reduced her dress to a beautiful two-piece. The middle portion was gone completely, leaving her stomach bare for my eventual touch.

The top remained complete — mostly, apart from some fraying around her cleavage — but the skirt had suffered badly, getting considerably shorter and thinner in the process, forcing her to cross her legs to protect her the most important bastion of her modesty.

And that was not a move without cost. Crossing her legs while her skirt got shorter and shorter revealed all of her legs, along with a generous glimpse into her plump ass.

Her conflicted gaze, dancing between her own dress and the food in front of her was simply too amusing, especially since she was doing her best not to look at me while she tried to decide between protecting the scraps of her modesty, and the pleasure offered by the food.

She was turning out to be even more hedonistic than I expected, which was a great feat considering her reaction to the massage back in the safe house, though it was not without an explanation. After all, the safe house had been a dangerous place, preventing her from enjoying my services properly.



Of course, the principle of research lay in repeated testing, I decided as I took a step toward her without a warning, using the full extent of my dexterity to keep my presence subtle as I did so, timing it perfectly with another large bite of her, which made her close her eyes.

Before she could open them, my hands were on her shoulders, my fingers already laced with mana.

[-317 Mana]

“What are you—“ she started, only to be interrupted by a delicious moan as my fingers started to dance on her shoulder, caressing her skin with the great skills I had developed as I let my mana inject into her body.

The resulting moan had been spectacular, even better than I expected, suggesting the combination of the food and the massage was strong enough to blank her mind momentarily. “I’m massaging you to make your dinner more comfortable, mistress,” I said mockingly.

“I don’t —“ she started, but when I used magic to float another bite of the delicious dinner I had prepared for her, her lips parted open readily, taking it in. Together with the flood of pleasure she was getting from the massage, she was barely able to swallow her food as she moaned.

She was really weak against pleasure.

I chuckled at her reaction even as I continued to caress her shoulders, even as my view got better with each passing second, revealing more of her body. “I can stop if you want,” I offered, but only when I was absolutely sure of her answer.

Or more accurately, the lack of a one.

She said nothing as I continued rubbing her shoulder, her dress continuing to disintegrate, confirming the stories about the hedonistic nature of the dragonkind. Then, her top got even smaller, giving a glimpse of her areolas, yet she made no attempt to make me stop, focused on her food.

It was more erotic than our previous adventure. At least, she had the bubbles to hide her beautiful body then. Now, she only had a scrap that mostly displayed her breasts.

Until I decided to push things and grabbed that part, and ripping it without a warning.

The sudden movement managed to achieve what the slow disintegration of her clothes failed to

achieve. “Hey —” she exclaimed in panic, only to be interrupted by a moan when I pushed forward even more shamelessly and grabbed her breasts.

It wasn't a soft, gentle touch, not even something that could be mistaken by a massage even under the most permissive definition of the word. I was just mauling her breasts mercilessly, enjoying the smoothness of her skin. Maybe it was the sudden intensity of the pleasure, or maybe my daring as I abandoned the role of a servant, but she said nothing, just stayed in her place, receiving the pleasure of my treatment.

Even the rest of her food stayed on her plate, untouched.

It took another aggressive move to make her speak. One of my hands stayed around her beautiful breasts — two glorious globes too big to fit on my hand — alternating between squeezing her flesh and twisting her nipples. Distracted by the treatments of my fingers, she had missed the significance of my other hand moving lower.

Until I ripped the remains of her skirt as well, leaving her beautiful body completely naked.

“That's too much,” she gasped as she jumped to her feet, but before she could make a move, my hands were already on her shoulders.

I didn't actually use the full extent of my strength, of course. All she needed to do was to push my hands away, and she could have escaped.

Yet, she stayed.

“No,” I said as I waved my hand, and every single dish on the table flew away, colliding against the wall. As their crashes filled the room with a unique symphony.

Before the pieces could even touch the floor, I touched her back, pushing her on the table. Once again, there was no brute strength behind my touch, but still mewling under the pleasure of my other hand, she just moaned as I pushed her down, her huge tits pressing against the crystal surface of the table.

For a moment, I did nothing, enjoying the sight of her plump ass, though it wasn't as important as her slightly parted legs revealing her glistening core. Her body continued to blush as she found herself helpless against the pleasure.

I didn't give her time to get her wits back as I pressed on her shoulders harder, stealing her breath in the process even with her tits acting as two beautiful cushions. Her gasp echoed in the

room even as my fingers caressed her ass, reinforced with mana once more.

[-781 Mana]

“What are you doing,” she gasped, her voice a mixture of shock and arousal.

“I’m serving you, of course, mistress,” I said even as my fingers danced over her perfectly-toned ass, enjoying the sensation. “You clearly like a constant flow of mana, and I chose to deliver it the best way possible,” I added before a chuckle escaped my mouth. “Well, technically the third best, but there’s no need to spoil the fun by skipping the sequence, is there?”

She didn’t answer, which wasn’t great harm, especially since her lips were busy moaning deliciously. It didn’t help the intensify of her voice when my fingers finally found her wetness, dancing around incessantly.

The gasp she let out was beautiful, almost as beautiful as the lack of protest as my fingers found her knob, teasing it aggressively. I could have taken it slowly, but the moans she was letting out were so urgent, so helpless that I didn’t dare to.

What if she collapsed halfway? That would be a great tragedy.

So, my fingers started to intrude around her entrance, enjoying the way she clamped around my fingers, her wetness only overshadowed by her tightness. “No,” she finally managed to gasp, but considering she was pushing her ass back, trying to take more of my fingers into her, it was hard to treat it seriously.

Her moans got more and more intense, inviting me inside her. And I doubted it was an exclusive invitation, just for my fingers. Letting out my shaft plunging inside her would have been easy and, without a doubt, rewarding, but I had a much more fun sequence planned. Why should I spoil the fun by hurrying up?

After all, where was the fun of vanquishing a dragon if the dragon didn’t beg for it again and again?

The dance of my fingers soon yielded the ultimate result, and she started clenching around them as her wetness flowed, her moans filling the room completely.

However, her climax wasn’t the only surprise. Two horns appeared on her head, not only adding another exotic layer to her already mystical beauty, but also giving me a very handy tool for the next step of the fun I had planned.

“How kind,” I murmured in amusement as she moaned.

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

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Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 6491 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Seventy

I put my finger on one of the emerald horns that appeared on her head, enjoying their texture. “Hmm, they are surprisingly smooth,” I said, only for her to blush even more than I had been fingering her earlier, though it lacked the carnal aura her earlier blush carried.

I had a sudden inspiration. “How shameful, losing control of your transformation just because of a little massage,” I murmured. Her intensifying blush suggested that I hit the nail on the head.

I couldn’t help but smirk as I realized I had managed to identify the specific source of her shame due to the intensity of her blush. I was getting really, really good on the subject.

“Such a shame,” I murmured as I caressed her horns. “They are such beautiful accessories of you, why would you feel ashamed of them?”

“I’m not ... ashamed of them,” she managed to murmur, her breathing still quick, showing that she was having trouble handling the invasion of pleasure. “It’s about maintaining my transformation. Partial transformation shows ... weakness.”

I chuckled. “You don’t need to worry about showing weakness while you’re with me, mistress,” I said with a chuckle even as I grabbed both of them. “I’m just a lowly servant, after all. I can’t even imagine commenting on your power and performance.” Even in her state, still lying on top of the table, that earned an angry gaze, and she opened her mouth to answer.

Too bad that I had no intention of allowing her to succeed.

I pushed my hips forward, filling her mouth with my shaft even as I grabbed her horns. “And why would you hate them. Look just how convenient they are,” I said as I used them as leverage. And just in case she was dissatisfied, I used our carnal connection to deliver even more mana to her.

[-1290 Mana]

Facing a flood she hadn’t experienced, at least from me, the moan she let out was simply spectacular. Coupled with the pleasure she was feeling it immediately pushed her to the next stage, her angry gasps once again underlined with moans.

And as my shaft started to invade deeper into her throat, her gasps interrupted by her beautiful gagging, I couldn’t help but smirk. While her attempts to make me pay back had been amusing, it would be a lie to say they hadn’t been annoying at any point. Especially the last time, when

she interrupted my fun just as the things with Oeyne were starting to warm up.

Luckily, she was nice enough to compensate for it, I thought even as I pushed my hips forward.

“Try to wrap your lips around it tighter,” I suggested, and much to my joy, as I continued to pump, her lips tightened around my girth, making it more entertaining as I continued to push forward.

Her blush started to get more and more intense, a testament to the impact of pleasure on her hedonistic nature. Amusingly, however, her shock also suggested it was an area of pleasure she seldom indulged — if any. Otherwise, she would have reacted to my advances more smoothly.

I pulled back after an extended merciless pumping, allowing her to catch her breath, but when I took a step to the side, she surprised me with a moan of disappointment. “It’s ... finished?” she asked, ready to protest despite the roughness of the treatment she had been receiving, though it was followed by shock as she realized the nature of her own reaction.

How very delicious.

“Don’t worry,” I said even as I put my hand on her shoulder. “Sweetie, you have a lot of work to do,” I said as I pulled her off the table, her short stature making it very easy to lift her. Although, with my strength, I could probably try to lift it.

A trial for a later time, I decided even as I grabbed her shoulder and forced her to her knees, not trying particularly hard to limit the impact. I trusted a dragon to handle her knees hitting the floor easily.

It turned out that I was wrong. “Ouch,” she exclaimed, her pain clear. “Be careful!”

“Sorry, your dragoness,” I said even as I grabbed her horns once more, the somewhat taboo nature of that act enough to silence her until I could invade her mouth once more. Though, her lack of resistance to pain was surprising. I had watched her fighting against several people without the slightest hint of discomfort even when she was on the edge of death.

Though, on second thought, maybe her forms differed not only in looks but also in terms of physical resistance. Such a detail certainly needed to be used more, I decided as I roused my mana once more, some of it for her to be delivered through my shaft, the rest of it creating a nice, magical chain to wrap around her arms, pinning them in place.

[-1645 Mana]

The moment the chains wrapped around her arms, her eyes widened in protest. Unfortunately, her mouth was adequately filled, preventing her from speaking about it.

Her magic stirred, trying to dispel her bindings, but our bodies were too close, and with my mana inside her, breaking her attempts was trivial.

Or, it was supposed to be trivial, I thought even as I realized I had been forced to use more mana than necessary to establish the task, essentially bullying her spell with my excessive mana.

I continued pumping into her beautiful mouth even as I let my mind wander about the reason for the impact difference. Luckily, she tried to flare her magic several more times until she was discouraged by the repeated failures, allowing me to get a better understanding of the nature of her spell.

It was the complexity of her mana patterns, I decided. Just like the dress she had conjured earlier, her spell had been based on a much more complicated structure. Even less stable considering it was supposed to be an instant spell.

But once again, it lacked the instinctual understanding I had been enjoying with any other spell, making it significantly harder to truly understand. I needed a comprehensive lesson from her.

Naturally, it was a task for a different time.

Instead, I suppressed her magic as I tightened my grip around her horns once more, pulling her forward harshly. Her beautiful tits pressed against my thighs as my shaft invaded her throat, her emerald hair dangling freely.

Her head bobbed beautifully under my rough treatment, her moans getting more and more intense even with the obstruction in her throat. Yet, she didn't lose anything from her enthusiasm as she swallowed more of my shaft, even with her arms tied behind her back.

Pity, I thought. I liked when she was getting angrier, so I stopped grabbing one of her horns and slapped her breast, only to flare angrily.

"Hey," she gasped when I pulled back. "What are you doing?"

"Sorry, mistress," I said with a chuckle. "But they are too tempting. Maybe you should make them smaller."



“I can’t,” she said in a matter-of-fact tone, confirming my guesses about whether her human form was fixed, or it was something she had created based on her mind.

“Then you’re going to suffer through it,” I said even as I slapped her breasts once more even as I filled her mouth once more. Then, I grabbed her tits, squeezing her nipple, which made her moans even more intense.

Another flood of mana was her reward.

[-480 Mana]

It proved to be a good decision, as the reward she received, along with the additional mana I used to wrap around my fingers, worked wonders to calm her down even with my disrespectful actions.

Though, as the treatment lengthened, she started tapping my head, asking for me to pull back. “You didn’t earn it yet,” I said to her as I quickened my assault, enjoying the tightness of her throat. “But don’t worry, you will soon,” I added.

A cute moan and an angry glare was my answer.

It was as good as a sign as any to ask me to move faster. I grabbed her beautiful horns, invading her throat, again and again, smirking in satisfaction at the effectiveness of my strategy while the pleasure slowly invaded her hedonistic being.

And when she started moving in response, pushing forward along with me to make my pushes even more impactful in her own volition. Even her hips started to shake reflexively, tempting me to escalate my services to a point I hadn’t been planning to bring. Not this quickly, at least.

Her throat tightened around my shaft, making me focus on the present rather than trying to plan the next steps. Soon, the pleasure become unbearable, and I exploded into her throat, filling it with my seed.

And, since I was such a kind, helpful servant, my explosion was laced with a lot of mana.

[-1840 Mana]

Her moans as she tried to swallow every single bit of my seed, licking her lips to make sure nothing had gone to waste, was simply beautiful. “Such a hungry mistress,” I said with a chuckle as I lifted her in a bridal hold, walking toward the bed in the corner.

Yet, trembling with pleasure, the only thing she was able to do was to send an angry glare.

It was a good time to interrogate her.

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 4820 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Seventy-One

I let the magical chains over her hands dissipate even as I took the last step toward her bed, laying her on the bed. My initial intention was to take the final step, teaching my mistress the true meaning of pleasure.

But, as she lay on the bed, her legs parted open readily despite her angry glare, showing that she was more than ready for the next step. Ironically, it made me change my intention even as I lay next to her.

“You deserve a massage after all the exhausting effort you have displayed,” I whispered to her as I flipped her, making her lay on her face, caressing her shoulders softly.

“That’s it,” she gasped, unable to keep her protest suppressed as not only a massage was not something that could answer to her burning need, but also I didn’t use any mana to coat my fingers this time, making her disappointed.

“I’m feeling tired after the great exertion. Can’t you just drain the mana the wards providing?”

That made her pause for a moment. “It’s not the same...” she murmured.

“Really?” I murmured, though it wasn’t hard to guess why she preferred my mana to the natural mana. The same skill that allowed me to achieve things that many assumed impossible.

Tantric.

“Too bad I’m too exhausted,” I said. “Of course, I can push myself, but...”

“But—” she started, only for a moan to interrupt her as I laced my fingers with some mana, teasing a sensitive spot on her lower back, one I had discovered earlier.

“I have a research project to finish. Of course, if you can help me answer my questions, I wouldn’t have to fear exhausting myself. Perfectly reasonable, right?”

At this point, she was not in a position to reject my perfectly reasonable offer. “What’s your research about?” she asked, showing that, despite her pleasure, she wasn’t fully gone.

For a moment, I was tempted to ask about the details of the deal between her and the headmistress, but I kept myself back, still afraid of revealing the lack of my knowledge at this stage. I needed her even more distracted before I touched that particular box.

“Nothing much, just a few questions on an area of magic I’m not very competent,” I said even as I thought about the best area to focus on.

Arcana was certainly out. Not because it would be useless, but I had already displayed a great competency in the area, making it hard to ask more direct questions. In a similar vein, most of the Elemental abilities were also not viable, as I had displayed a great competency in front of her. Earth to open tunnels, fire in combat, and air to travel.

“I need to increase my competency with water magic,” I said, deciding to focus on one area I was yet to display my competency in front of her, yet the magic was simple enough. Asking her help in more complicated areas, like healing, was also a possibility, but that would have too many variables for me to filter, trying to decide which part was about her personal knowledge, and what was about the underlying difference between the areas.

Water elemental offered a good balance between complexity and simplicity, all without making her suspicious. “It’s not a problem, right?” I asked, even as I improved my massage service.

[-295 Mana]

“Ooh,” she murmured even as my fingers danced along her spine, her moan more provocative than her nudity. And considering her beauty, it was an incredible achievement. “I can do that,” she managed to stammer. “I’m very competent using elemental spells.”

“I’m glad to hear it,” I answered. “Giving a massage to you is certainly a better alternative to spending my time in the library, wasting my time.”

Then, she froze for a moment. “Don’t you have skills to teach you stuff,” she asked, suspiciously.

It was a good question. Luckily, it wasn’t hard to deflect. “We have, but I didn’t receive a skill for water magic.”

“Why don’t you just kill monsters until you get one?” she countered, though it was more of a genuine question rather than a challenge, showing her understanding about the System was very limited. Certainly not deep enough to be aware of the trade-offs included.

At this point, I didn’t waste time talking about the details. “I have seen the spells you have used, and they are better than the ones the System provides,” I explained. It was not a fully accurate statement, but then, it wasn’t supposed to be. I wanted to coax her pride.

“Of course,” she murmured even as the pleasure continued to invade her whole being, showing

that pride was a lever was as effective as the pleasure she was feeling.

How convenient.

“Why don’t you show me a few water spells, mistress?” I asked even as my fingers continued to caress her naked back, making her purr.

“You’re lucky that I’m magnanimous,” she murmured even as my hands slowly slid toward the side, to start teasing her beautiful curves. Her chest was pressing against the bed, but that was woefully inadequate to hide her beautiful assets. Even facing down, her breasts still managed to shout their presence from the side.

She didn’t change her pose much as she raised her finger, a small ball of rotating water appeared on the tip of her finger, and she started explaining the basics of elemental casting. “The first thing about casting water elemental spells is the concept of fluidity. There’s no explosiveness in water, but it doesn’t support rigidity either...” she started explaining.

Interesting, I thought as I listened, even as I slid my hands toward her ass, enjoying their wide expanse smoothly. The main points of her explanations overlapped with my own knowledge, which was to be expected. After all, if the nature of the elements differed that much, she wouldn’t have been able to use magic here.

[-460 Mana]

However, while construction principles of her spells were the same, the actual design of them was significantly more elegant and efficient, through significant stability concerns were apparent even at a glance, once again confirming that the System significantly affected the environment.

Unfortunately, the excuse of teaching made sure that I couldn’t ask pointed questions about it, at least, not yet, so, even as I listened to her words, I focused on caressing her beautiful ass, the pleasure working excellently to distract her from the absurdity of our situation.

As she continued to explain, my fingers continued their naughty wandering, until they started caressing the edge of her wetness. Her explanation staggered as she felt her most treasured spot being teased again. “Is there something wrong?” I asked, faking exaggerated concern. “Maybe you want me to practice the spells,” I added as I pulled my hands away from her body.

“Not necessary!” she exclaimed as she half-turned, revealing her beautiful tits, her body still trembling in anticipation, her eyes glowing with concerns. Though, when she met with my

mocking smirk, her panic turned into frustration, realizing how her enthusiasm looked.

And the fact that she still cared about the impression such a reaction created after our earlier play...

Marvelous.

“If you say so, you’re the teacher,” I said, not bothering to hide my mocking tone as she lay on her face once more. But, before she could settle, I put my hands on her hips, and flipped her, her tits jiggling beautifully.

“What?” she gasped, shocked at the sudden move.

“Let’s work on your other areas as well,” I explained as I put my hands on her stomach, slowly moving upward. “Unless you want to stop halfway, of course.”

“N-no, please continue,” she answered, her body shuddering beautifully. “It helps you to focus.”

I said nothing, not even smirking at her words. Her paper-thin excuse didn’t even need that, if her rapidly spreading blush was any indicator. Instead, I focused on her beautiful body as I caressed her stomach, slowly climbing up as she did her best to stay still and not moan — though, not always successful.

Soon, I arrived at the border of her breasts, but rather than moving forward to their glorious expanse, I stayed on the edges of it, pushing her more and more, her out-of-control breath making the journey even more spectacular, inviting me for a stay. The excessive amount of mana I was using didn’t make things any easier.

[-1100 Mana]

Yet, I bypassed them, focusing on her neck and collarbones instead, each pass making her moan louder and louder, mixed with frustration. I could see that she was getting close to another climax, only to be stopped by the slowness of my hands.

The biggest evidence was her legs, rubbing against each other.

“As a teacher, you should provide an example,” I whispered as I parted her legs and put my knee between them, preventing that shortcut. As a bonus, it allowed me to hover over her body, my shaft dangling in front of her, which didn’t help her composure any.

Yet, I continued to caress her stomach and her shoulders softly, teasing her just enough to keep

her aroused, but not enough to allow her to reach climax, her expression tightening with each second.

At this point, I expected her to start begging, but she proved herself to be tougher, managing to keep her mouth shut. Clearly, despite everything, she had a limit, and that limit was actively begging for my cock.

It only made it more fun. I continued caressing her as she tried to explain water magic — ironically, helping me to understand more about the unique aspects more as she started to lose her concentration, and her lessons turned into spewing a lot of unrelated, random facts, giving me a better understanding on the differences the System created.

Yet, I found myself more enthusiastic about pushing her limits, curious when she would crack. My smile widened as she continued to moan in frustration, even her excuse of teaching forgotten as the pleasure and frustration danced. Then, her moans started to turn into growls, growls that reminded me that no matter how tiny and harmless she looked, she still had another form, ready to be unleashed.

Before I could consider whether I should stop, however, she exploded into action. She suddenly stood straight and grabbed my shoulder and threw me off her. I let her when I realized I would still end up on the bed, only for her to straddle my hips.

If this was her punishment, I was happy with my crime.

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

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Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

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SKILLS



Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

## Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Two

Being crushed under a dragon should be a scary concept, the kind that was supposed to make my heart explode in fear.

However, considering the current form of the little sexy dragon who thought herself to be my mistress, the current speed of my heart had little to do with fear, especially not when her hips started to dance over my lap.

The expression on her face was beautiful, a mixture of arousal and frustration, victory suspiciously absent. “You look frustrated, mistress—” I started, only for her hand to appear over my face, shutting me up.

“Don’t you dare to speak,” she growled, smart enough to realize the direction of the words I had prepared, and with no intention of allowing me to mock her. Yet, her current frustrations with my attitude could not be compared to the burning need of her unmet arousal.

Otherwise, she wouldn’t have climbed on my lap, rocking back and forth as her weight pressed against my shaft. She didn’t take me inside her, but from the way she was going, I guessed it wasn’t too far away.

So, rather than trying to coax her, I put my hands under my head, enjoying the show. “Stop it,” she warned.

“Stop what?” I asked, not hiding my smirk. “I didn’t say anything.”

That earned another growl, but rather than trying to push me on the issue, she put her hands on my chest, using the leverage to rock me more desperately. Though as her dance picked up speed, I was starting to feel tempted to call off our little game as I pushed her against the wall or bent her over the table once again, taking her freely.

Yet, I stayed in my place, obedient. As much as the idea of taking her roughly was fun, it couldn’t compare to the idea of my lust-filled dragon getting so overwhelmed to take me.

Being ridden by a dragon was a unique experience.

So, I kept my mouth shut even as her delicate hands caressed my chest, her nails sharp enough to leave actual bleeding wounds on my chest — though they recovered only after a moment. She was almost straight looking up at first, but the more her hips repeated their glorious movement, the more she leaned forward. Her tits soon started to rub against my chest, but she

avoided kissing me.

Amusingly, she wouldn't be able to kiss me without changing her position even if she wished to do so. A humorous drawback of her shortness.

I managed to keep my opinion to myself about her height, courtesy of her sexy ass, rubbing against my shaft repeatedly. Yet, she was determined not to sink my shaft into her sopping wet entrance, repeating the same motion again and again.

Unfortunately for her, I had no intention of allowing that to be the whole theme, especially since, I had the ability to change it without actually taking back the control.

First, I brought my mana to the surface once more, coating the head with a generous amount of it and leaving the rest to the shaft, before I chose the exact apex of her movement, and changed the positioning of my shaft slightly.

[-610 Mana]

When she moved back once more, she noticed the sudden change of alignment, but not before the tip sank into her wetness. "No," she gasped as she pulled herself back, only to stop halfway as I felt the mana around my shaft starting to be drained with an efficiency that surpassed her earlier attempts.

Sex was truly the superior way to deliver mana after it went through Tantric treatment.

I said nothing, just lay on my back, my hands crossed under my head, enjoying the sudden conflicting expression on her face. She said nothing at first, nor did she move, which was interesting because it left the tip buried in her wetness.

"It's wrong," she murmured, but her voice lacked confidence as she suffered a mental battle about the merits.

I could have whispered her suggestions that it was nothing, claimed that it was a step she had to take to get my mana, or even blamed her for cowardice. Any of those options would have made her move faster, taking us to the next step.

But I kept my mouth shut. None of those options were as entertaining as watching her struggle with her emotions, failing to come up with an answer. Why should I abandon her delicious conflict for a lesser entertainment?

Her plump ass started to tremble as she tried to come to a decision, going back and forth in her mind while her hips didn't move at all, which would have been disappointing if it wasn't for the crown of my shaft still buried in her entrance, allowing me to enjoy her warmth thoroughly, her wetness getting out of control.

She was a dragon, mighty, fascinating, and prideful, a combination that should have ensured the victory of her willpower. Unfortunately, she was also an unabashed hedonist with a weakness for finer things, not to mention her greed begging her to get more of my precious mana.

As much as watching her conflict had been fun, her decision was never in doubt. "Just the tip, there's no harm in that," she whispered. I suspected it was more about convincing herself than explaining it to me.

Her hands landed on my chest once more as her hips started to rock, making her beautiful tits sway to her rhythm, my tip slipping in and out. I expected her to be impatient, sinking deeper, but she showed incredible determination — for her standards — and managed to stay limited to the tip.

I was not above cheating, not when I could do it at the expense of some more disposable mana. I reinforced the mana coating my shaft, but this time, keeping the focus a touch lower than the tip. The perfect bait for a greedy dragon.

[-320 Mana]

It didn't take long for it to show results, as her hips picked up speed. At first, she managed to restrict herself around the tip even with the increased speed, but then, in one of her rockings, she moved deeper.

It was a mistake that was corrected quickly, making me doubt the success of my strategy. Luckily, that doubts didn't last long, as, after just a few seconds, the mistake happened again... And again...

Soon, she moved too far to define the situation as just the tip, even under the most generous descriptions. Not that I was complaining, not with my shaft parting her delicious pussy lips more with every repeat, even though it was a slow process, like she was trying to make me forget the previous limits by her rapid movements.

Suppressing the temptation to help her was extremely hard. Luckily, I had better control over my desires than her — when the said time was being measured in minutes and not days, if I

were to be honest — and managed to keep my desires to grab her hips and sank myself into her depths.

Luckily, she was a very kind dragon, and her movements continued to escalate, my shaft parting her tight lips more and more. Slowly, the tip moved deeper as she took more and more of my hard cock inside her, drenching it with her wetness.

She closed her eyes as the pleasure started to intensify, like closing her eyes would allow her to reject the situation. Normally, I would have mocked her until she opened her eyes, but the sway of her tits as she quickened while she took even more of my shaft inside her was a good way of asking mercy wordlessly.

Her moans exploded louder and louder as my shaft continued to disappear, the pleasure reaching a high level, triggering my temptation as well. I finally let my hands move, grabbing her swaying tits — just to make she didn't injure herself recklessly due to their extreme swaying, of course.

I was a nice boy.

As I squeezed her tits, the pain cut through the pleasure she was feeling, working as a reminder. Her beautiful emerald eyes popped open, looking down in shock, no doubt realizing just how far she let things escalate.

"I ... I think that's enough mana," she muttered as she started moving, freeing my shaft of her presence. The only problem: it wasn't the freedom that I wanted. Or she wanted, if her torturous slowness was any indicator.

I had no doubt that she would soon continue with her game even if she limited her actions slightly in the process. But I didn't want to go through the same repeat again, not when things were just getting fun.

So, I cheated a bit. A simple Biomancy spell, weak enough to cost only a single point of mana — though it only affected her because the mana was already helpfully devoured by her, preventing her from resisting the spell — to make her leg twitch.

And just like that, her reluctant rise reversed, and reversed hard as she slid down, devouring the full length of my shaft as she slid down, her cry of pleasure worthy of a dragon.

Well, almost full length, I thought in amusement as I felt the head pressing against her absolute limit, not moving more, yet some of my shaft was still out.

After all, she might be a dragon, but in this form, she was still deliciously tiny...

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 3942 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Three

My sexy dragon's eyes widened as she found herself filled to the brim after her accident. Her mouth opened, no doubt to complain, but her body had other intentions.

Like releasing another earth-shattering moan, showing that, even in this form, she had the lungs of a dragon.

"Careful," I said even I squeezed her tits, enjoying their softness. "Try not to take anything you can't handle."

The slight dig to her pride once again worked excellently even when she had found herself in a position far farther than she had planned for. "I can handle anything you give," she replied immediately, ready to defend her pride.

Though, she seemed less sensitive about where her pride was leading her.

With that, her hips started rocking once more, her movements much more enjoyable as she started to do her best to devour the entirety of my shaft. She failed, of course, but that didn't blunt her enthusiasm. She deserved a reward, I decided.

[-680 Mana]

Of course, as she did her best to make my presence in, the pleasure started to get more and more overwhelming for her, her moans rising uninterrupted. So much that, her passionate rhythm started to stagger.

So, I brought my hands down, landing on her hips to help her maintain the beautiful rhythm she had started, every push widening her beautiful tightness. "Move faster, mistress," I ordered, still emphasizing the last word to mock her for her daring to use me as a servant.

I was, as always, a vindictive bastard when the situation called.

That earned an angry glare, but nothing more, as she was busy moaning uninterrupted, pleasure long invaded her whole being. And her challenge to absorb all the mana I was providing only made it even more difficult to maintain control.

It was a good opportunity to examine her transformation process once more, I decided as I turned a part of my attention on the transformation that was going on in her body. I examined the layers and layers of construct she was building on her bones, slowly changing the nature of



it.

After a couple of minutes, I decided to stop. Unfortunately, even with the lesson I had received from her, and with the assistance of my Biomancy, I wasn't able to truly understand the nature of her trick, let alone create a viable copy for my own usage.

Whatever she was doing was either a special dragon ability, or something that required special training. Either way, I decided to shelve it for the moment, to be tested during the first feasible opportunity.

I turned my attention back to her reckless movement, enjoying her moans as she jumped up and down, doing her best to stuff her tiny pussy. With my hands on her hips, maintaining the pace, along with the tenseness of her slow approach earlier, it didn't take long for her to climax explosively, tightening even further around me.

She collapsed against my chest, her breathing out of control, her desperate moans begging for rest.

Too bad that she didn't earn the right to rest.

She failed to react as I grabbed her waist and twisted her, and she found her chest pressing against the softness of the bed once more. A soft murmur of comfort left her mouth, only to be interrupted halfway as she felt my hands grabbing her beautiful horns once more.

"What are you doing?" she barely managed to say between her labored gasps, still trying to throw off her latest orgasm.

"Continuing the massage, of course," I said even as I pressed my hard shaft against her entrance once more. "Don't tell me that you are too exhausted to handle it."

"Of course, I'm not," her answer came predictably, her pride ever-useful. "However—" she tried to continue. Unfortunately, I would never learn what she intended to say, because I chose that moment to push forward, replacing her words with an urgent cry of pleasure.

Despite everything, her eagerness to enjoy another round was never in doubt, and she replied with a moan, even as I pulled her horns back, forcing her to bend into a very special shape even as I pinned her under me.

She tried to push her ass back toward me a few times, only to abandon that when she realized just how hard I intended to impale her. "Too hard," she gasped.

“Why, mistress,” I said, once again mocking her even as I pulled one of my hands away from her horn to wrap around her hair, changing my hold into a painful pull, while using my free hand to slap her plump ass. “Don’t tell me that you, a great dragon, can’t handle a weak human?”

I loved her predictable her answer was. “I can handle anything you can dish out,” she gasped, even as her voice was strained. Since she was showing such kindness playing along, I decided to reward her with another flood of mana.

[-740 Mana]

As I picked up even more speed, I could feel that I was slowly getting toward an explosion of my own. The exquisite tightness and deafening moans of a sexy dragon were not easy to resist.

Of course, I had no intention of letting her succeed before I had thoroughly made her pay about her temerity to position herself as my superior. “Moan for me, mistress,” I ordered even as I spanked her ass again, hard enough to leave a red mark even with her physical resistance.

“I’ll make you pay,” she managed to growl.

“Oh, I’m looking forward to it, mistress,” I said even as I slapped her ass again, enjoying the way her plump flesh rippled. However, considering with all the strength and magic under her command, those words were the only thing she had used to dissuade me from it, I doubted she was hating the treatment as much as she tried to reflect.

I smirked as I started to enjoy the full benefits of my controlling position, slowing down and speeding up in surprise timings, increasing her pleasure even further, her body nothing but a toy under my command.

Another orgasm hit her, turning her moans into barely audible mewling as she tried to stay conscious. Even for a dragon, chain orgasms of explosive intensity were not that easy to handle.

For a moment, my gaze slipped toward her puckered hole, tempted to take her from there, but I decided against it for two reasons. First, she was already too far gone in pleasure. She was under the risk of collapsing immediately if I made such a radical move.

Second, dazed and filled with pleasure, it was the perfect time to interrogate her.

Without skipping even a beat, I leaned forward, my hands once again on her horns, pulling her back enough for her tits to dangle freely. “So, tell me about the deal between you and my boss,”

I ordered.

Normally, I would have tried to be more careful in my interrogation, but at this point, she was far too gone to mislead me, maybe even understand the political significance of my question, that I wanted to learn about my 'boss'.

"That upstart bird," she managed to whisper between her moans as I didn't stop my hips. Yet, despite that, she managed to convey the dismissal she was feeling.

"Yes," I said, unable to hide my amusement.

"You shouldn't work for that lowly bird, and instead work for me," she managed to murmur dazedly.

"That's a good offer," I whispered suggestively. "And we know that you can keep this poor servant satisfied," I added, unable to suppress the temptation to mock her, which made her growl angrily for a second before pleasure melted her annoyance again. "But how can I work for someone I don't even know the name of."

"Janelor," she responded immediately. "My name is Janelor."

I chuckled. "It's good to know, mistress. Now, why don't you tell me exactly that weak bird wanted from you."

"She wants me to save her from her arrogance, of course," she managed to whisper between her moans, her dismissal clear. I did my best to listen, and not explode in amusement as she blamed someone else for being arrogant.

"How exactly?" I asked.

"She's nothing but a lowly soldier of that annoyingly sanctimonious Host of Light, prancing around declaring their superior virtue, but the moment she found an opportunity to rise, she took it without blinking," she said.

"You're talking about the Divine Spark," I guessed.

"Yes. I have no idea where she had found such a substantial piece of it, but she had wildly overestimated herself when she tried to absorb it," she explained.

"Is there a special condition to absorb Divine Spark, or is it about her power," I asked.

“Divine Spark is more trouble than its worth,” she declared, which, unfortunately, implied that she didn’t have deep knowledge. I doubted she would miss a chance to brag. “There’s a reason no dragon ever lowers themselves to absorb one.”

Interesting, I thought, though not exactly willing to dig deeper into her statement about dragons not deigning to absorb one, as there were too many probabilities, from a potential incompatibility to her being wrong. It wasn’t really important, not at this moment.

“So, she had overestimated herself, so what? Can’t someone help her?”

She managed to chuckle between her moans. “That’s the funny part, the one that could help her easily is her boss, but the moment she dared to absorb the Divine Spark of Light, she become a heretic.”

“Interesting,” I murmured. “And she wants the help of your boss,” I said.

“My friend! I have no superior,” the dragon growled angrily, quick to correct my assumption. I doubted that was the case, but once again, it was semantic that was not interesting to spend any time on. I had already learned what I needed from her.

“If you say so, mistress,” I said mockingly even as I sped up, the sound of flesh hitting flesh filling the room, mixing with her moans and my grunts, my grip around her horns as tight as her nether lips’ grip around my girth.

With my desperate ramming, it didn’t take long for her to reach another orgasm, but this time, I accompanied her in the direction, filling her with my cum and my mana as she exploded in ecstasy.

[-1685 Mana]

“Yes, yes, yes...” she moaned desperately as the pleasure and my power filled her directly, infusing her whole being. But this time, she failed to resist the call of exhaustion, slumping on the bed as I pulled out of her, my release drizzling out.

“Such a beautiful view,” I murmured as I quickly dressed, leaving her in her bed, my cum staining her, a great proof of my selfless efforts to keep my mistress happy.

Now, I needed to have a talk with the other mystical being who was under the impression that she was my boss.

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 2890 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Four

In my place, someone else might have spent several days interrogating Janelor carefully, creating a very comprehensive plan before finally challenging the angel with two Divine Sparks and one of the strongest factions in the Empire under her control.

Yet, I stood at the entrance of the headmistress' tower, knocking recklessly without her summons, and it wasn't just the — justified — confidence of my abilities to create a strategy quickly.

No, I was pushed by past knowledge.

I didn't know if it was paranoia, or it was some kind of sixth sense I developed after handling several disasters in quick succession, but I could feel another disaster in the distance.

Maybe it would be the Eternals, discovering Janelor's hideout, maybe it would be the Princess and her secrets proving more dangerous than the headmistress and the school could handle, maybe it would be Helga and Cornelia managing to put themselves in danger, forcing me to save them.

I had no idea which one of them would actually result in a crisis, but I didn't trust my luck enough to avoid all of those triggers. So, the sooner I started working on the headmistress, the sooner I could fix her misunderstanding about my employment status...

After knocking on the door several times, I had received a message from the headmistress, and I responded by saying it was very urgent.

I still waited five minutes before the door opened. "Come to my room," her voice echoed, and I started climbing the spiral stairs.

Her room contained the full range of decorations it had when I had visited to receive the blessing of light, interesting considering they were not out when I had sneaked into her room and watched her purification ritual. She must have put them on hurriedly to maintain the same impression.

The slight dampness of her hair, no doubt lay forgotten as she hurriedly put on her armor, confirmed that I had stumbled on her in the middle of her cleansing ritual.

Pity, she didn't invite me in immediately. I would have loved to watch her.

“What’s the emergency?” she asked, her expression as stiff as her voice, no doubt ready to bring out her fury if my interruption was unmerited.

“I have managed to get the dragon drunk,” I said.

“That’s it,” she said, her frown tightening as she looked at me. “That’s what you interrupted me for,” she added, her wings glowing as I felt her light magic flare, her aura of power blanketing the room, reminding me that she was not someone to be dismissed.

Luckily, she was quick to clamp on it. She didn’t have the luxury of using her powers casually, not if she didn’t want her Divine Spark to go out of control — an even bigger problem than I had initially estimated if her deal with Janelor was any indicator.

“She has loose lips when drunk, especially when speaking to a servant, and she had mentioned a couple of ways of suppressing the effects of Divine Sparks,” I said, then took a step back, like I was about to leave. “But if you don’t treat this as an emergency, we can talk about it during our next meeting.”

“Stop!” she gasped, her magic flaring once again, but this time with a chaotic feeling. “How do you know I need that urgently.”

“The dragon mentioned it, of course, while gloating about an unfortunate fate,” I answered. She looked at me suspiciously. “I told you, she has loose lips.”

“That ...” she started, only for her to swallow what was without a doubt an insult, her anger clear in her tone. Her anger was understandable, considering she had accepted every single request of Janelor, yet she still blabbed about her secrets.

Secrets that revealed her deadly vulnerabilities.

She was not unjustified in her anger. Janelor spilled those secrets when she was drunk, though she was drunk of pleasure rather than alcohol. I didn’t even know whether alcohol had that effect on the dragons, though luckily, the headmistress didn’t question me about that part, busy thinking more important aspects.

Like whether this mysterious technique slipped from a dragon’s drunk lips could actually help her control the Divine Spark.

A nonexistent one, of course, as I needed an excuse to poke and prod around the headmistress’ own reservoir, in the hopes of stealing substantially more than I could during her transfers,



hoping to discover something in the process.

“What’s the technique?” she asked after a long pause, which didn’t surprise me, not with the risks she was facing.

“She had mentioned several containment strategies, and one of those containment strategies was good enough to store the divine spark in your body, isolated from everything else,” I said as raised my hand, and a complicated, three-dimensional structure appeared in front of her, a variant of the little internal trap I used to store some of the Divine Spark after I had stolen from her.

In some aspects, it was better than that design, as working on the spear for a full day with no interruption helped me to understand its design principles more, making several improvements to my own structure.

“It doesn’t look very reliable,” she examined the structure carefully.

She was correct, it didn’t, because while I had made several improvements, I wasn’t showing her the full structure. “She showed it to me only for a moment, and considering she was very drunk at this point...” I said, not bothering to finish the explanation as I blamed it on the intoxication.

“Better than nothing,” she commented after she examined the structure for almost ten minutes. “Do your best to make her talk,” she ordered. “Getting the complete schematics is the priority.”

“As you wish, mistress,” I said. “Do you want to conduct a test right now, to see if it works?”

“Maybe,” she said as she raised her hand, and a similar structure appeared on the air, barely bigger than a fist. The difference, the oppressing amount of light mana radiating from it, her mana type determined by her angelic nature.

A glance was enough to show she had made several changes to the structure I had displayed earlier, a couple worthy of being copied into my own design to make some significant improvements, showing that she wasn’t exactly a slouch when it came to magic research and analysis — though it might be also about no doubt the extreme research she had sunk into the subject.

I felt her pushing some of her mana, barely worth a couple of points, along with some Divine Spark.

And the structure exploded immediately.

“It doesn’t work,” she said with a frown.

A genuine frown appeared on my face as well. “It should have lasted more than just exploding immediately,” I said. “Could it be about the nature of your mana too similar to the spark, making it create some sort of resonance?”

“Maybe,” she said, thoughtful.

“Let me try,” I said as I raised my hand, creating a copy of her storage spell, though a few small mistakes to undersell my magical ability.

[-130 Mana]

“There’s a mistake here,” she said, pointing the most glaring error I had included, and I changed. Then, she put her hand, injecting the same amount of mana. Once she stopped maintaining control, the Divine Spark went wild, smashing against the limits of the container, but it easily contained the spark.

She watched my success carefully for a while before she flared her mana once again. But this time, rather than using her mana directly, she created a ward, pulling power from outside reserves, making the construction a longer affair, though the ultimate result looked well.

Yet, when she put some of her mana, it exploded once again. She turned to look at me suspiciously before her gaze dipping down to my structure, which was still stable. She examined it carefully for a while before replicating the same thing, only for it to shatter again.

Her frown tightened as she gazed at me, unable to hide her distaste before she replicated the same feat again. This time, when she injected the mana, the structure stayed stable. “Good work. Your discovery solves most of my problems,” she said, though I didn’t miss the tenseness of her tone.

Nor did I miss the sudden calmness of the mana in her latest container. I would have exploded in laughter if it wasn’t for my Subterfuge skill, helping me control outward signs of my amusement, and even with that, it was a close call.

I was amused, because I was familiar with the behavior of the Divine Spark after my own attempts to contain it, and it was certainly not as calm as that when mixed with ordinary mana.

The most reasonable explanation, my dear boss didn't put any Divine Spark into her structure, trying to trick me that she was able to copy my structure.

I wondered why she was lying? Was she trying to look more competent than she actually was? Or was she trying to tell me that the vulnerability revealed by Janelor was not as bad as her words indicated?

Pity that her attempts were destined the failure the moment I noticed the changes in her mana.

"I'm happy to hear that," I said. "Is there anything else I can help you with?"

"Not for now," she said. "But you earned a reward. I'll have to think something for you when you visit me again tomorrow for the empowerment."

"As you wish," I said as I nodded respectfully before leaving, hoping that the nuggets of information I had revealed to her would be enough to lit a fire under her...

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 7960 / 8000 ]

SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (1/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Five

I had left the headmistress' tower behind with a purpose. Since I was going to visit her again in the morning to receive another infusion of Divine Spark, I decided to spend all I had been storing for a while.

I could have gone back to my room, but after staying inside for the whole day for some fun, and some not so fun, activities, some fresh air would do good. Not to mention, I was going to absorb several times more Divine Spark than my earlier experiments. Staying away in case of an unexpected reaction was for the best.

No need to inform the headmistress about my little naughty secret.

Once again I sneaked out of Silver Spires and got away using an air elemental, but I didn't go to one of my hideouts, not willing to hide underground in such a nice evening. Instead, I had reached a nice meadow, and after killing the beasts that used it as a resting area — a trivial effort with my power — I established a few wards that would hold for a couple of days, and sat down.

The Divine Spark was still locked in the storage I had created in my body, trying to burst out ineffectually. After my most recent studies, I could see several ways of improving the storage, not that it was necessary. Compared to what the headmistress was trying to hold, what I was holding was nothing more than a sliver, making it much easier to handle even with inefficient storage.

Of course, I would have no hope to a similar amount with the headmistress. The only reason she was able to do so was that she had achieved some kind of partial merger, aligning it with her pure mana.

With a calm expression, I crouched, letting my mana rotate, to let it dip into the storage during a part of its journey before rotating all along my body, slowly strengthening. However, I didn't start that at first, and instead just rotated mana in the same patterns I had seen Janelor had been using whenever she had excess mana, and did my best to replicate the pattern.

[-18 Mana]

[-290 HP]

"Fuck, that hurts," I groaned as I tasted the failure on a level I wasn't expecting from such a

little amount of mana. Luckily, I didn't try it with something more.

I healed myself before repeating the trick, only to end up with nothing but pain again.

[-13 Mana]

[-345 HP]

And again.

[-16 Mana]

[-490 HP]

And again.

[-8 Mana]

[-550 HP]

"Okay, I surrender," I murmured as I breathed hard, trying to ignore the unfamiliar sensation. Clearly, whatever I was doing wasn't going to work, especially with the pattern. The more successfully I replicated her trick, the more damage it created.

Maybe I was doing something inherently wrong, or maybe it was a vain act in the first place. Maybe it was something that could only be applied by a dragon.

Pity that I couldn't even use that as an attack, as after penetrating that deep into someone's body, there were easier options to kill them, and that assumed I could replicate such a complicated pattern inside them with their mana trying to fight against me.

Regardless, I took a pause to heal myself and refill my mana pool once again before starting to rotate my mana, this time letting it dip into the reservoir of Divine Spark rather than relying on just my mana, and letting the small sliver I had stolen to be absorbed into my body, losing its unique properties in the process. Since it was a process I had replicated earlier, I expected it to happen easily.

Yet, there was a difference in the process. My body absorbed it at the same speed with one very important exception. One of my fingers, was the same finger I had used as the target for my experimentation. That part absorbed the divine spark much faster, yet other than that, showed no radical change.

Interesting, I thought as I let my mind wander about the implications of it. Pity that the improvement I had received didn't justify the amount of mana I had to spend — or the excruciating pain I felt — during the process. And that was without considering the potential danger of replicating the same trick in a more vital location like my heart.

I focused on depleting the remaining Divine Spark, feeling it empowering my body. It took barely an hour, and only because I wasn't in a particular hurry. The rewards weren't particularly impressive. It was hard to quantify since it didn't react with the System, but I doubted the overall impact was more than a few points split among various stats. From a perspective of powering up, it was a total waste.

Yet, I wouldn't change it for anything. The more I learned about the System, the more I realized how unreliable the power it gives. Someone could block it the way I could block the others, leaving me powerless.

And I had no intention of finding myself powerless. Living two decades as the mule was more than enough.

After finishing the process, I was about to have a walk around the school, a mixture of relaxing trips and hunting beasts — as my reagent reserve was almost completely empty — when I felt a sudden mental flare. It wasn't mine, but coming from an external source.

It wasn't the first time I had felt that particular flare, a mixture of panic and loss of strength, but that hardly made me feel calmer, because the last time I had felt that, it came from Helga and Cornelia, and I had barely able to save them despite using Teleportation.

Yet, this time, it wasn't even an option, because before I could even consider that, the feeling started to weaken, making it impossible to use as a guide.

It was time to take a risk, I thought even as I reached my other perk, Empowerment, even though my first experience with it hadn't been any more successful than Teleportation.

Yet, it was better than the alternative, so, I threw it to the distance.

[Empowerment (0/1)]

Even as the counter of my skill dropped, I sensed the power of the Companion Node flare at a distance, turning into a flame from cinders.

Then, before I could do anything else, the sensation disappeared completely!

“No,” I gasped in anger as a sudden feeling of loss filled me. I conjured another air elemental, dumping as much mana as I could manage, and started flying at the full speed, making no attempt to stay concealed, uncaring the possibility of it being a trap.

It was reckless, of course, but recklessness was better than the sudden feeling of loss that filled my being.

I moved toward the direction of the flare. It wasn't an accurate one, but it was the best I had, and certainly better than trying to teleport without a beacon.

While I moved, I focused inward, trying to understand the source of the feeling. I could still feel five Companion nodes, split across many directions. The two brightest ones — Helga and Cornelia, the carriers of completed nodes — were still together, with no sign of something wrong.

In a different direction, I could feel two together, though not as strong. Titania and Marianne, I recognized easily. And since the other one I could feel at the direction of the school, it suggested that Oeyne was safe as well.

It only left Aviada, the one that was most likely to overestimate herself to take a dangerous task. “Fuck, please be well,” I murmured even as I tried to focus on the absence of a feeling, only to come up predictably empty. I continued flying, hoping to find something that would give me a better target as I flew even higher on the sky, cutting whatever beast stupid enough to think that I made a good target, not even slowing down to pick any material from them.

A few minutes later, I finally found what I was looking for. A huge forest fire burning with all the colors of the rainbow, creating an extraordinary view.

I didn't bother to slow down as I dived down, my perception allowing me to catch everything, in particular, a familiar redhead with a bow, trying to defend herself against the beasts, frenzied as they tried to escape the fire. I dispelled the elemental and dived down, already casting arcana bolts to kill everything that surrounded her without any risk of area damage.

She was my only source of information.

“You,” she gasped as she noticed me. “Help her, she's in the middle of the fire!”

“What happened?” I asked even as I cast a modified healing spell, allowing me to detect any kind of life inside the fire, only to come up negative. There was no one inside.



Unacceptable, I thought even as I gathered my mana...

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6241 / 6528 Mana: 6890 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Six

I stood still, looking at the out-of-control rainbow fire, my mind running wild as I tried to process what happened when Carla hugged me hysterically. Understandable, considering she had watched her patrol decimated, her allies escape to abandon her, her best friend lost in great peril.

“Help her,” she gasped as she tried to swallow her cries.

Although I understood her concerns, sympathized with that even, I didn’t have the time to cater to them in the middle of such an emergency. I put on her shoulder, calming her magically with a Biomancy trick.

[-43 Mana]

I simply didn’t have the luxury of doing it otherwise.

Then, I started speaking to her, bringing the full weight of my charisma to bear. “Carla, I need you to calm down and tell me what happened. That’s the only way I could help Aviada,” I said.

I wanted her to talk, because the fire was giving me a bad feeling, making me afraid of poking it. I would still do that, ultimately. I had no intention of abandoning Aviada, especially since I could still feel her companion node as I walked closer to the fire, but it was muted.

Like there was a curtain between us, preventing me from sensing her properly.

Unfortunately, I was under time pressure, because I had no idea what caused that muting effect, which meant I had no idea just how long Aviada would continue to maintain her state of living.

Yet, I waited for Carla to start speaking before taking an action, because it wasn’t an exaggeration to say the fire was extraordinary. It was burning trees, which was rather ordinary for fire. Burning the stones and earth underneath, less ordinary.

Instantly destroying the detection spell that I tried to use to see if there was a living creature, even more unexpected.

“I don’t know,” she murmured, her voice slurring slightly as the calming spell worked on her mind. “We were patrolling when a large fire falcon ambushed us, killing two of the members immediately. It was at least Class Twenty, maybe even stronger. Yet Aviada managed to defend

us, if only barely. If the others supported her, maybe we could have...”

“Focus on what happened, we need to save her,” I reminded her. “Did something extraordinary happen? What happened to the beast.”

“I don’t know,” Carla gasped. “It looked like the beast was about to win, but then the glow appeared around Aviada, and she somehow killed the beast in a slash... But as the slash hit, the fire suddenly exploded in all those colors.”

It was probably my fault I decided even as I started to flare my mana again. The fire was too extraordinary to be created by just a monster, at least by a monster that Aviada could resist alone.

To extinguish the fire, my first reflex was to use water magic, which was the opposite element of the fire, which would allow me to suppress it, forming my mana into a huge water wave...

[-1690 Mana]

Only to fail spectacularly.

The moment the wave came in contact with the fire, an explosion occurred as I felt my mana being wrenched out of control, and similar chaos of color spread into the water. “Fuck,” I murmured as the fire flared even worse, threatening to burn us to cinders even in the distance, forcing me to shield us with a spell.

Luckily, the indirect heat didn’t create the same effect.

I was ready to pull back to find an answer, when the water wave rose as well, almost conscious as it slammed against the fire, making my eyes widen in shock.

Something extraordinary was going on.

I watched as the fire and water entangled, fighting violently, threatening to create a disaster, their rainbow colors cycling faster and faster. Unfortunately, the fight was not equal, and the water, despite the elemental advantage, looked like it was about to lose the fight.

So, I decided to reinforce it with another wave.

[-952 Mana]

My spell hit the wave from behind, only to melt into its structure rapidly, giving the water the

much-needed opportunity to fight. I watched carefully, trying to find an opportunity, but that was a slow process.

With the Aviada's echo weakening, I doubted I had the luxury of waiting until the fire resolved completely. It was time to take another ridiculous risk. At first, I thought she was weakening, maybe even dying, but after some concentration, I realized it was different. She was just getting away.

Yet, while that was better than her dying, it wasn't that much better, because the way she had been getting distant felt foreign. It was hard to explain without knowing the reason, but it felt much different than physical distance. Rather than just walking away, she was sinking underground.

I needed to understand what was happening. And for a quick result, I only have one option, the Arcana dimension.

Luckily, after my disastrous teleportation attempt, I had worked on some basic safety measures, like how to create a temporary beacon that would allow me to return to my own location rather than risking disappearing in Arcana dimension completely.

Pity I needed to work more to create one that wouldn't degenerate after a couple of minutes at best.

[-1320 Mana]

After making sure the structure was complete, I threw a glance at the chaotic dance of the elements. They were still in a stalemate, so I closed my eyes, letting my body fade in the material reality...

And step into the twisting nature of the Arcana dimension, the chaotic energies flowing wildly around me, worse than any tornado, threatening to destroy my whole being if I dared to rest there more than a few seconds.

Yet, all the twisting colors, the pain, and the threat of total destruction if I dared to dally too long managed to take the backseat, because of three new surprises.

The first, and the most noticeable, was the gaping wound at the giant dome that surrounded the Arcana dimension, giving me the glimpse of a show even more wild and chaotic. Unfortunately, even I had described the dome as surrounding all dimensions, thanks to the warped nature of the distance in this dimension, it was hard to say that it was far away.

“Fuck!” I gasped in pain as some kind of Arcana energy, yet more potent and wild slipped through the wound.

It didn't hit me, but even passing near me, the damage it created was significant.

[-1230 HP]

Even worse, the sudden flow touched the second problem. Two mercurial presences, fighting in the Arcana Dimension, one made from fire and the other made from water, and the mysterious energy empowered both of them, making them lash against each other with increased aggression.

It would take a total idiot to miss the extraordinary nature of the fire, but even then, I didn't expect it to only be a physical manifestation of whatever was going on in the Arcana dimension, much more overwhelming than the little mana-burning rainbow. Even worse, the water spell I had used had an equal echo...

[-281 HP]

It didn't make much sense, so spent another painful second to examine them despite my constantly-draining health, only to notice some kind of line connecting to the wound, one that connected both of them as if it was empowering them.

Hardly a detail to be dismissed, especially if my theory about the dome as the border of the System was accurate.

Luckily, not all was bad, because the wound on the dome was recovering with a speed that was noticeable to the naked eye.

[-247 HP]

So, I turned my attention to the third issue, namely, the location Aviada. I managed to find her easily, confirming she was still alive, but that was the limit of the good news.

I was able to distinguish her location sufficiently, which would have been good news if it wasn't for one very important detail.

Her presence was behind the Dome, and I was only able to feel her through the wound.

A wound that was closing in great speed, making it impossible for me to pass through even if I was willing to take such a great risk. She was somehow still alive, but I couldn't risk just pushing

forward to see whatever that was protecting her would work to save me as well.

I turned my focus on the battle of fire and water, and noticed that they were losing their vigor rapidly as the wound tightened.

It was time to go back.

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 4523 / 6528 Mana: 4981 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]



# Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Seven

I was already flaring my mana as I stepped back to the material dimension, afraid that crazy fire and water would have driven closer. Considering the impact they had on the mana, I had no intention of testing their impact directly.

Luckily, they were still tangling in the distance with all the intelligence and control of rabid animals, giving me a chance the focus on the more immediate problem.

The corrosive energies of the Arcana dimension, threatening to melt both my equipment and my skin.

I flared the mana I had gathered, dispelling the corrosive energies that could damage my body more. My clothing and the rest of my equipment weren't as lucky, I noted as tried to save my clothing once again, but only being half successful. Helpless, I had reinforced the gaps with mana and temporary conjured material replicating the trick Janelor was quite the fan of.

[-690 Mana]

Unlike her, I didn't construct the spell matrix excessively lightly, so the conjured material would hold a few days. And, luckily, this time, I wasn't carrying anything I couldn't replace easily — and only because I didn't have time to rearm myself after the previous teleport attempt destroyed my weapons.

I really needed to put some time to make my instantaneous teleportation ability useful. Not just because it was a very functional utility ability, but it was obvious that I had no hope of following Aviada's disappearance without perfecting it.

The chaos that was behind the dome, as revealed by the wound, was rather scary. I couldn't help but frown as thought about that. I had known that the next crisis wouldn't have been too far away, but I didn't expect it to arrive without giving me chance to get a full night's sleep.

Nor did I expect Aviada to be the source of it.

Apparently, I was still too optimistic.

"What happened, is Aviada well? Where's she?" Carla asked as she dashed forward to me, taking a step into the wards I had created without care.

I shook my head even as I pulled my gaze away from the battle of elements, turning my gaze

toward her, barely holding myself back from giving her a lesson about the perils of walking into mysterious wards.

I decided against it after a momentary consideration. “Don’t worry,” I started instead, wanting to calm her down. “I have discovered that she’s still alive and well.” My words were only partial truth, as while I had detected Aviada was still alive at that moment, I was having significant trouble feeling her as the wound continued to close.

I had no way of divining her fate once it was completely cut other than wishing.

But there was no benefit to Carla knowing that. Whatever Aviada was facing was not something her archer friend could help directly. And even if she tried to rouse the school, it was clearly not an issue that could be the rest of the faculty — at least not by anyone she could talk to.

It was a topic that even Titania knew precious little about, making the headmistress and Janelor the only reliable sources of information, neither a common student from the warrior department could access.

And that assumed she knew what to say in the first place.

“How can we save her?” she asked, her panic replaced by enthusiasm as she heard about her status.

I took a sigh as I turned my attention to the battling elements once more, noting that they were getting weaker — but not at a speed that would make me calm down. Moreover, the water was once again starting to lose against the fire, so I reinforced it with another flash of mana.

[-382 Mana]

“Unfortunately, due to a magical resonance, she had experienced a cascading teleportation failure, and it’ll take a while for me to go and bring her back, so, you should keep it a secret,” I said, not above reinforcing the impression with a judicious application of my Charisma, enough to ensure she wouldn’t go around trying to organize the weaker instructors to act.

The situation was complicated enough without others poking around, or worse, the spies in the school getting wind of the extraordinary nature of Aviada’s disappearance. I didn’t expect them to be able to follow Aviada, but it would be a problem once I successfully saved Aviada.

I steadfastly avoided any possibility of failure.

“I see,” she murmured as she fell silent, not knowing what to say, joining me to watch the dance of the elements. I was reasonably confident that even if the fire managed to defeat the water, it would fade away, but reasonably confident was markedly different from absolute confidence.

And the world was dangerous enough without introducing out-of-control fires with the ability to burn everything, including pure mana.

“Why is this fire still burning?” she asked, her voice calm. Too calm, even. Suppressing the shock medically made her effectively drunk, I realized. “Should we try to extinguish it?”

“Don’t worry, I’ll handle it. You should rest a bit after such a trying ordeal,” I said, and before she could answer, I put my hand on her head, sending her to sleep and healing her wounds simultaneously.

[-281 Mana]

The last thing I needed as I carefully examined a dangerous phenomenon was a functionally drunk warrior that might decide to poke things exactly at the wrong moment.

Instead, I spread my mana carefully, examining the ongoing battle, the elements reacting with a destructiveness I had never seen before. I observed them, not only to control the battle, but also to understand whether there was any trick I could learn from their destructiveness. Unfortunately, that didn’t seem to be the case, as before I could pole poke their structure to get a better feel, my mana evaporated with the aftershocks of their fight.

So, I focused on healing myself, which cost me a nice chunk of the mana I had managed to recover as the wounds resisted my attempts to heal them.

[-2890 Mana]

[HP: 6528 / 6528]

I had no idea what the turbulence that escaped from the wound, but there was no doubt about the danger buried in its nature. Otherwise, it wouldn’t have taken that much mana to erase a glancing hit, one that didn’t even connect with me properly.

Even with the system, the world was dangerous.

After that, I waited for the fire and water to slowly extinguish themselves, and once they disappeared, I even went back to the Arcana dimension to check the status of the wound,

though this time, I managed to step back before I could receive anything other than cosmetic damage, which was healed easily.

[-296 Mana]

Both the wound, and the elemental chaos in the Arcana dimension were gone. Only then did I dare to step into the area that had been utterly destroyed by the flames to do some magical tests.

Not that I expected much after the destructive battle, aftershocks enough to destroy the spells I tried to construct.

Unsurprisingly, the area was in total flux, the mana dancing chaotically before the System managed to absorb it back.

Yet, the remaining echoes were interesting. The fire had left, for the lack of a better term, its shadow behind, and the sensation was certainly not something I had come close to replicating by fire magic despite my significant expertise backed by my stats.

Yet, some things were clear. It was not something that could be easily replicated by a simple spell, as it had an animalistic feel to it. I would have assumed somehow the beast Carla had mentioned was responsible for that feeling, but I could feel the same echo from the water element, whose source was my spell.

Pity I had bigger priorities than delving into the exact nature of those interesting changes.

I didn't expect to find anything else, but I still continued to search, not wanting to miss a clue due to laziness.

It was a good thing that I did, because, after five minutes, I found something even more interesting. The residue of a new type of energy, familiar yet different at the same time, distinct enough for me to properly categorize it even if I couldn't identify its exact nature.

The Divine Spark.

Or, more accurately, A Divine Spark, because even if the residue that remained was too small to be properly interacted — more of a shadow than anything with a substance — it was clear that I wasn't dealing with the Divine Spark of Light or Darkness. It was something different, with some kind of edge that was lacking by both.

Sharp was the best I could describe the shadow it left.

And just like that, things got even more complicated.

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 7830 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Eight

The mark of existence for another source of Divine Spark was not exactly welcome, especially since it pushed an already-complicated situation to a new level, making Aviada's disappearance an even bigger puzzle to solve.

Like things weren't difficult enough with the elements acting wild and women disappearing behind the reach of the system.

Naturally, I didn't leave the area immediately after discovering the divine spark. I stuck around, spending the next couple of hours doing my best to discover some new evidence. I had analyzed the ground to understand how the out-of-control mana affected the area, did my best to take samples of the weakening shadow of the Divine Spark — which was particularly hard as the System had already devoured most of it — and recording other extraordinary details, no matter how insignificant they sounded.

I even took the risk to shift back to the Arcana dimension a couple of times to see if I could get any more clues — only after setting several guidance beacons to ensure I could return without a problem, naturally, no matter how much mana those temporary beacons burned — but the twirling magical energies was even worse in terms of retaining evidence.

Ultimately, all my extra work was in vain, yielding no new clues.

Aviada was gone, lost in a place where I strongly doubted the System didn't work, leaving nothing other than a bunch of clues too complicated to properly decipher, from wild elements to the ghost of a Divine Spark with a mysterious sharp nature.

Even worse, I couldn't even understand the weird reaction of the elements. The easiest assumption about their nature was to say they were real elementals, but that wouldn't be correct. First of all, elemental beings were denoted by their excessive purity, and those rainbow-fires and chaotic water were not exactly pure.

They were strong, far stronger than any elemental I had read about in the library, but they weren't exactly pure in terms of their nature.

More importantly, elementals were feared because of their great intelligence, even the weaker ones having the survival instincts of animals — particularly mercurial and disobedient ones, even — which made them very difficult to control.

There was a reason I had used faux-elementals that worked strictly under my control despite burning a lot of mana rather than risking to summon real elementals.

Unfortunately, even there, I wasn't able to come to a conclusion, because everything I knew about true elementals, I had learned from the books and notes of the other mages rather than my own experience — a direct consequence of lacking time to properly experiment with everything that was going on.

Yet, I also remembered the panic Janelor had shown when I dared to summon a faux elemental as a ride, which conflicted greatly with my direct experience until that moment. Ultimately, the existence of the wound in the Arcana dimension, together with the clear link between those out-of-control elements with the mysterious world behind the Dome, was a more reasonable reaction.

There was nothing else to be done," I decided, not in the mood to take yet another mystery about why elements might work differently under the control of the System compared to outside.

I had more than enough problems already.

With a sigh as I summoned another air elemental mount for myself — though not before summoning a much smaller one, just to test whatever that made the elements go crazy was certainly gone — grabbed Carla, and went back to Silver Spires.

[-1190 Mana]

With the meeting with the headmistress coming closer, there was no point wasting time. While traveling, I kept Carla unconscious. Only when I arrived, I woke her up.

"Huh, we're back," she murmured sleepily as she glanced around, realizing the danger was truly gone.

"Yes, we are," I said. The sleep clearly helped her after her close call with death.

"What about Aviada?" she asked, though this time, she didn't panic as much despite the worry tinging her tone, clearly encouraged by my display of skill.

"She's far away, so it's going to take a while for her to return," I explained once again rather than dismissing her. I needed her calm, after all. The last thing I needed was for her to go around, poking things unnecessarily.



“What should I say?” she asked.

“I’ll handle informing the school, you just need to explain the fate of your patrol. If they poke, tell them you were already too far away to notice anything. Try not to talk about the rainbow nature of the fire, though,” I said. If that was as extraordinary as I assumed, revealing that would only make things more complicated.

“But what about the other survivors. They had escaped quickly, but the flames were too big for them to miss,” she countered.

It was a good point. In the mess, I had neglected that part. I thought a bit about the merits of finding them and ordering them to silence using the authority of the headmistress, but after some time, I decided against it.

Unless I killed them, one of them would definitely leak it, and while it was something I wanted to keep secret, I didn’t want to keep it secret by killing several innocent people.

Even if they were cowardly enough to abandon Aviada.

“You can talk about it,” I finally said. After all, I had no real reason to put that much effort to keep that secret, especially since doing so had the risk of alerting the others to more than a few inconsistent reports from a lost patrol.

“What about the sword?” Carla commented. “Should I talk about how extraordinary it was?”

“The sword?” I asked, my thoughts coming to a halt as she mentioned it. “Why don’t you explain to me first what exactly happened, and why the sword is important?” I said, as a frown appeared on my face. Up until now, she didn’t mention the sword.

I wanted to be angry at her, but considering I had magically calmed her down before putting her to sleep forcibly as I dealt with more urgent things, it would be a bit hypocritical to do so. Ultimately, it was my oversight.

That didn’t prevent annoyance from rising, of course. It was just pointed inwardly.

“It happened when the creature attacked. When she first started fighting, it didn’t look like she had a winning chance, so the surviving members of our patrol started running away. I stayed, trying to support her from a distance, but the defeat seemed inevitable...” she said, trembling softly as she remembered just how close she had come to death.

“Then?” I asked, prompting her to continue.

“She shouted, and her sword started glowing. Just like that, Aviada started swinging her sword faster and faster, each swings pushing the creature back. But when the creature attacked her with some kind of flame attack...”

“And...”

“I don’t know,” she murmured. “That part is a blur. I remember Aviada swinging her sword, and with its glow, the sword managed to cut the flames. But when she cut the flames, it turned into an explosion. When the flames fell, Aviada was nowhere to be seen, and the place was covered by those rainbow flames. Then, you arrived.”

The sword had clearly reacted with Empowerment perk, I thought even as a frown appeared on my face, not sure whether I would be surprised or not.

In a way, it was not surprising, because I had used the sword, and knew it was superior to anything I could craft without improving my skills even further. It was a complicated weapon, with many mysterious enchantments limiting its usefulness to anyone but the designated wielder. For it to hide such a mysterious feature was not impossible.

Yet, I was also surprised, because the last time I had used and analyzed the sword, I was significantly lacking in terms of crafting knowledge, and assumed that while it was a very good sword, ultimately, its mysteries wouldn’t stay ahead of me.

Aviada had always been the focus. The sword had been just an afterthought.

However, Carla’s story, along with the evidence I had collected told me a different story. Aviada’s mysterious victory, the disappearance of Empowerment after usage, the wound on the Dome, even the existence of that wild elements...

If her story was accurate, Aviada’s sword somehow forcefully took the Empowerment, and somehow used that not only to kill the monster, but also to create wounds in the borders of the system.

A temporary one, but I doubted that trivialized the extent of the achievement.

It wasn’t the worst of it, however. It wasn’t hard to guess that the sudden ability the sword had displayed was tightly linked to the sharp Divine Spark I had managed to discover.

I had worked so hard to find a source, only to miss the one next to me.

Of course, there was no guarantee whether the sword itself was the source. There was much circumstantial evidence against it as well. I had examined the sword several times, and while I clearly missed several important details about the sword, both me and the System failing to detect Divine Spark hidden in the sword was a stretch.

Ultimately, however, it was impossible to make a decision.

“Do not mention anything about the sword, it’ll only make her a target,” I said to Carla. I had no idea whether the sword had the Divine Spark, or it was an indirect effect created by Empowerment that I was reading inaccurately.

Still, before I could delve into it, it was best to keep it secret.

Even if Aviada was currently lost in the distant lands.

Luckily, I had two sources I could subtly question about the mysteries behind the event. Conveniently, I even had a meeting with the headmistress a few minutes later.

I just needed to find a good excuse to question her without revealing the truth of the event.

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Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 8000 / 8000 ]

SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Seventy-Nine

When I arrived at the headmistress' room, I found it decorated with crystal pillars once again, glowing softly as they charged with her unique-natured mana, pushing the oppressive darkness of the wards she used to block the System.

She was once again dressed in her gold-embroidered armor, carrying a sword, her beautiful wings carrying an impressive sight with their soft glow. Unfortunately for her, I had already seen her dressed like that before, so I noticed other details. Like the subtle hint of blackness under her eyes, indicating a sleepless evening. One that also implied exhaustion as well considering just how strong her supernatural body must have been.

And, it wasn't the only extraordinary detail I had noticed. I could also feel the remains of a repeated spell, most likely wards, lingering in the air. A momentary focus had even revealed the type of wards she had been casting.

The storage ward.

Even with my exceptional Perception, I had barely been able to notice the lingering remains, but that didn't mean she had cast it only a couple of times.

After all, pure mana wards, unlike the ones that had been created with the assistance of physical objects, left next to no residual once destroyed. For me to be able to pick them casually meant that she must have created hundreds of them during the night.

And, if her frustration — which, unlike her exhaustion, was much easier to notice on her beautiful face — was any indicator, her repeated attempts to create alternative storage for the Divine Spark had failed spectacularly.

How fascinating.

“Good morning boss. What a great morning, right?” I said cheerfully, amused that I wasn't the only one that had gone through an extremely exhausting evening, though unlike her, I was able to hide it better.

Her twitching eyelid was enough to show just how much she appreciated my greeting. “Come on boss,” I said, pushing even more. “You're an angel, shouldn't you be more cheerful in the morning.” This time, it earned a growl, warning me to keep my mouth shut.

It was enough teasing, I decided as I took my position while she climbed on the platform

wordlessly, not even warning me as her mana flooded me, much stronger than the previous time, enough to be classified as ill-advised.

A cry of pain escaped my mouth before I could suppress it, surprised by her move. A punishment, I noted, unable to hide my grin as I once again created a magical funnel leading to my fake soul-space, stealing as much as Divine Spark as I could manage.

Despite the pain her sudden flood had created, it was hard to say there were no benefits. A stronger flood meant more fragments, and more importantly, it meant she could pay less attention to the sudden disappearance of some of them, allowing me to steal more without making her suspicious.

When it came to an end, I had almost stolen five times the previous amount despite a similar duration, most of it safely locked in my body — a perk of the improved storage I had managed to develop — isolated from the hungry fingers of the System, a sliver of it went to the fake soul space, improving the Light Node, showing the headmistress that her great effort hadn't gone to waste.

However, she seemed to miscalculate the drawbacks of her not-so-subtle punishment, because the moment she cut her mana flow, she trembled, leaning forward as she was going to fall.

Luckily for her, she was in the room with a perfect gentleman! I didn't waste any time before standing up and wrapping my arms around her. "Don't worry boss, I got you," I said cheekily.

"Stop hugging me," she gasped as she pushed me back, her face blushing much harder than I expected. "And stop calling me boss!"

"As you wish, boss," I said, smiling cheekily, enjoying her frustration as I acted significantly laxer. A cheekiness she could not push against too hard, not when I was her only way of keeping her important dragon guest happy, unaware that her guest was much more helpful to me than her, and I would have paid a great price for the privilege of accompanying her if she had presented the deal differently.

Especially since I had resolved the misunderstanding about the exact job description of a servant.

Still, watching the headmistress as she tried to swallow her anger at my playful jabs was beautiful, especially since she was even more uncomfortable compared to the subservience she had shown to Janelor.

Her thoughts were visible on her beautiful face as she weighed the importance of her problem versus admonishing me. However, ultimately, her needs won over her desire to reinforce her authority over my harmless rebellion. "Show me that storage ward again," she ordered.

"As you wish, boss," I said cheerfully as I created the storage, this time even simpler to make it easy for her to copy it flawlessly, watching as she forced another piece of Divine Spark. The storage held the Divine Spark in without any issue.

I expected her to repeat the spell after examining it a few seconds later, solving whatever that was preventing her from completing it, but she surprised me by injecting more Divine Spark into the storage, as if she was trying to break it.

Much to her surprise, it held on, even after she repeated the trick two more times. "How?" she gasped.

It was lucky that she was focused on the structure, because even I had a frown on my face. The capabilities of my storage had exceeded even my expectations. I was tempted to delve deeper into that, but I had more important questions for the headmistress.

Aviada's disappearance was more urgent.

"So, boss," I said while she started poking at my wards carefully with her mana. "Can you tell me more about the world beyond the System?"

"Why?" she asked, turning her gaze toward me suspiciously. "

"I think I can lead the dragon into spilling more important secrets during our discussion if I have more information to direct her, but if you think it's not important.."

"No, it's important," she said, her suspicion replaced by panic, enough to make me guilty about tricking her. At this moment, it was hard to imagine her as a mythical being hundreds of years old, astute enough to manage a complex entity like Silver Spires without revealing her true nature. "Ask me your questions." Though, as she said so, she pushed another sliver of Divine Spark into the storage, continuing to test its ability to hold Divine Spark.

"Let's start with something simple. How exactly is the nature of the lands outside the system."

Her expression showed that it wasn't exactly a simple question, but she still started to explain. "Before the System was established, the worlds were much more ordered. There was the central material plane, a complete world, and the domains of Major Gods surrounded the

material plane.”

“And where were those planes?” I asked.

“Floating in the aether, of course, but that’s not relevant for you. Aether is not something that mortals could step in. Even for the Demigods, it’s almost certain death. Only gods could easily travel in aether Dimension with the help of their avatars.”

I nodded in understanding, assuming aether was what I had been calling Arcana dimension. My attempts at teleportation had taught me just how hard was to successfully utilize it. I had only survived due to sheer luck.

“Can’t people just use teleportation formations,” I asked? After all, teleportation was not exactly a unique skill for me. It could be also done by ordinary mages, if one was willing to create two huge wards and spend an extraordinary amount of mana in the process.

Hardly something that could be used outside the direst circumstances, like reinforcing the capital during a disaster. And only then, it only made sense for some peak existences — at least, in terms of what the public defined as peak, like Titania — to use it.

“That’s only possible if both the target and destination are in the same plane,” the headmistress answered dismissively, not appreciating my interruption. “Without the shadow of the plane blocking the primordial aether flow, an errant wind would burn the wards easily,” she explained impatiently.

Interesting, I thought as I took note of it. I had no idea what primordial aether was, yet her tone implied it was something that was common knowledge, it was her distraction as she fed more and more divine spark to the storage yet it managed to stand, that was making her spill more secrets than she might otherwise explain.

Sometimes, even a word was more precious than gold.

Of course, it raised the question of how Aviada actually managed to survive such a deadly environment. I doubted my Empower Perk was enough to ensure her survival, especially with her absolute lack of magical ability. Yet, I had distinctly felt Aviada’s survival until the breach had closed.

The mystery behind her sword got even deeper.

“So, with the material plane blocked, does it mean the only other place is the domains of the



gods?" I asked.

"More or less," she answered. "There are some plane fragments big enough for people to live, but their shadows are hardly strong enough to establish a successful civilization. They might not exist—" she continued, only to be interrupted by an explosion.

My storage ward finally reached its limit, but the explanation was strong enough to force me to create a shield to protect us from the after-effects. While we were talking, she must have put much more Divine Spark than I expected.

"How can your storage hold that much Divine Spark?" she turned to me suspiciously.

I frowned. It was a question that I wanted the answer to as well. The performance of the storage surpassed my expectations as well.

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 8000 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Eighty

However, before delving deeper into the question of why my storage was better, I first needed to suppress the sudden flicker of doubt on the face of the headmistress.

Unfortunately, I had no option but to be honest. “I have no idea, ” I answered as I looked at her sharp eyes, doing my best to convey honesty. Though, amusingly, I used Speech and Charisma the same way if I had been trying to trick her.

The irony was hard to deny.

Luckily, the irony of my actions didn't prevent it from working. “How can you have no idea? It's your own spell,” she asked, delving into the operational details of my explanation rather than rejecting it.

I shrugged. “Hey, I have discovered it only yesterday. Pardon me if I don't have a working theory about the exact performance of my spell.”

She frowned, but considering the validity of my excuse — albeit a lie — she didn't have any right of pushing me on the subject too much. “Watch me create one, and see if you see any mistake,” she said with a frown, and created a copy of my simplified storage with great care, using her mana.

“It seems solid enough,” I said, frowning. Yet, the moment she put the smallest sliver of Divine Spark, it collapsed. “It should have worked, there's no difference I can detect,” I said. “Maybe you should try again using the ordinary mana. It might be clashing with your unique mana,” I said. It earned a frustrated glare, as it was clearly something she had tried before. Yet, she repeated, only to explode again.

“Explain,” she said.

I frowned. “May I use the external mana to create one,” I said.

“What difference does it make?” she asked. “The mana provided by the system is perfectly uniform, there's no compatibility difference.” Yet, she said nothing as I reached for the wards she had used, pulling some mana from the storage of the school, and fashioned another cage.

It also exploded.

“How,” she gasped, her frown much thicker, and she wasn't the only one that had that particular

expression. Because I had deliberately used nothing but pure mana to construct the cage, no Tantric manipulation, no Biomancy tricks, no Arcana enhancement. I didn't even push the mana density to the limit to allow it to be copied easily.

Yet, the external mana shattered like a dry leaf.

"I have no idea," I answered, though I had some suspicions, like the unique needs of my System and the constant demand for Divine Spark. Since I wasn't able to replicate it, it didn't seem to be a part of my abilities, but directly about the nature of mana.

A nature that was supposed to be uniform for everyone.

"Maybe we should experiment more to make sure we find the reason for it," I offered before the headmaster could, showing a sudden enthusiasm for the idea, more to convince her that I had no intention of hiding anything. "A few hundred experiments should be enough."

"We'll continue tomorrow," she said decisively, intimidated by my enthusiasm — though only with the help of her obvious exhaustion. And, since she had to supply the divine spark for every attempt, even if I was the one building the storage wards, it was more exhausting for her to test. "I have more important things to focus on first, we'll do it tomorrow," she said.

"As you wish, boss," I said cheerfully, doing my best to ignore the temptation to poke fun at her excuse, and left her, ready to conduct some experiments on my own.

Of course, the headmistress was not stupid, but from her perspective, I wouldn't be able to experiment alone, blocked by my lack of Divine Spark, unaware that I had managed to swindle her enough to conduct that experiment alone.

As always, the lack of information was the killer of sound decision-making.

The only frustration I had was that I needed to suppress the desire to question her more about the planar structure of the dimensions once more, but considering even if she had a method of easily traversing the primordial aether, which wasn't likely, she wouldn't just share it dismissively. I couldn't even rely on Janelor for that. If she had that, she would have used it to leave this plane.

And without a surefire method of traveling, I couldn't reach Aviada.

I decided to focus on the nearest problem. When I left the headmistress' room, I didn't dally around, and left the school as well, traveling back to the same spot I had absorbed the Divine

Spark to empower my body, once again riding an air elemental, ignoring Janelor's warning about the elementals once again.

I found myself on the same opening that I used to absorb the Divine Spark, the wards still in place to dissuade any monster that might decide to act adventurous — though, at this point, it was more about avoiding a momentary annoyance rather than trying to survive against the deadly threat they had consisted just weeks ago.

It was experimentation time.

The first thing I did was to create another storage, the simplest I could manage, with absolutely no unique mana involved, before using the headmistress' trick to inject some mana for it to contain. It managed to hold, which was not a surprise.

Nor was the notification I had received.

[Divine Spark Identified! Please absorb it to continue to support the operations of the System]

Yet, the difference with the notification I had received when I was with the headmistress was notable, burning with an urgency that lacked despite saying the same thing.

It was the difference between a dispassionate whisper and an urgent battle cry.

Interesting, I thought even as I created a larger cage around, using my own mana but keeping it connected to my soul space, not wanting it to waste by letting it evaporate. The ultimate destination was the same, the System, but one of them would be through my soul space, which seemed to be the smartest option.

After all, either my unique version of the System and the general System used the Divine Spark was completely independent, making the general system's consumption a waste, or they shared the same source, meaning it would make no difference other than crediting me with its collection and giving me higher level cap — at least that was what I assumed due to my limited inference based on evidence.

Either case, there was no point in not letting my soul space absorb the Divine Spark that would escape.

Of course, I could try to capture and stuff it back into the storage, but I didn't want to deprive of the System after it detected Divine Spark, just in case it had the ability to punish me for it. I had no idea whether that was possible, but it seemed smart not to poke that particular point.

It was one knowledge I was happy living without.

While my mind was idle, considering the implications of the System, I continued to feed the storage with mana, until it finally exploded, and my soul space greedily consumed it once the outer layer of my wards dragged those pieces back into my soul space.

[-682 Mana]

It took much less mana to burst the storage than the headmistress' attempt, which was interesting considering I had tried to make it exactly as strong, but it didn't take much to understand the difference. The System was once again trying to devour the Divine Spark, showing a much greater appetite than it showed toward mana without the headmistress' darkness ward there to block its detection capabilities.

No wonder she didn't go out casually. I doubted the added pressure would help her already-strained capabilities to contain the Divine Spark.

I focused on the experiment once more, this time creating the storage cage from Arcana mana, only for it to shatter instantly, not even able to contain the smallest spark, just like the headmistress' cage, or the one I had built up from the school's mana reservoir.

The result didn't surprise me, as if Arcana — the single most common magical proficiency — was the answer, I doubted the headmistress would miss the answer for centuries.

Just to make sure, I replicated the test, adding some elemental nature. I started with Earth, considering it was the one easiest to mix with ordinary mana due to its stable nature.

Yet, it failed spectacularly.

This time, it wasn't just the shattering similar to Arcana, followed by a containment failure, but a violent reaction, one that reminded me of the wild dance of the Elements — although not in nature, just in impact and explosiveness.

It would have been really convenient if those wild elements were a result of unlimited Divine Spark, but that was not really realistic. I doubted Divine Spark would have been such a valuable commodity if it could be just extracted from the wild.

Decisive, I had repeated the experiment again, this time trying to exert my craft skill, even though it was less of a mana nature, and more of a skill. It had worked, but not at a significantly better level than my initial attempt.

I had moved to the last part of my experiment. Tantric. Yet, when I created the Tantric cage, only for it to hold the Divine Spark without an issue, a sigh escaped my mouth rather than elation.

Success was good, but somehow, I couldn't help but feel that things got even more complicated...

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

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Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 6720 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]



# Chapter One Hundred Eighty-One

It was not without a reason that I was not glowing with happiness even as the first stage of my grand experimentation was a success, and I had identified why my mana had worked much better than the others to contain Divine Spark.

Tantric.

In a way, that was obvious considering it was only after receiving that ability I was able to help the ladies that shared my affection in many different ways, from easily refilling their mana in an efficiency that was impossible to copy to help them level up directly.

However, from a different perspective, it was dangerously damning. Because, until the Divine Spark, everything I had done was somehow related to the System. It was easy to write off the impact of the Tantric as a transitory success, allowing me to achieve something that could be also achieved by the others, just more smoothly.

The number of high-leveled combatants the Eternals were able to create in bulk certainly supported that conclusion.

Yet, as I looked at the Divine Spark of light smashing against the walls of its Tantric prison helplessly despite the power it contained, I couldn't help but think I had underestimated that particular skill.

Tantric was much more mysterious than just making mana softer and easier to control.

The question, I thought even as I looked at the fragment of Divine Spark, helplessly pushing against its special container, why I had made that mistake despite the obvious implications on the way. I should have noticed that sooner, I thought for a while, only to abandon that track.

Before I could delve deep, a more important detail distracted me.

The Divine Spark was calming down!

With a frown, I turned my attention toward the imprisoned Divine Spark, trying to understand why it was slowing down. For a scary moment, I was afraid it had some kind of consciousness, therefore realizing the futility of its escape, but luckily, that intimidating thought was invalidated easily, because the Spark continued to lose speed at a very steady pace.

Then, I noticed the brightness of the Spark was decreasing alongside its aggressive bouncing,

giving me another interesting probability. Tantric mana was somehow destroying the Divine Spark, which, interestingly, no less scarier than my earlier theories.

As I watched, I corrected my assumption once more. Divine Spark wasn't being destroyed, but transforming. Its brightness and aggressiveness were disappearing, leaving a much calmer concept behind, one that was much easier to transform.

It was hard to define the remaining energy. It was certainly not another source of mana, not even close. It was still an energy of the same intensity. It wouldn't be wrong to call it Divine Spark.

One thing was certain. It wasn't the Divine Spark of Light anymore.

Somehow, Tantric was able to get rid of the unique nature of Divine Spark, leaving only the pure energy behind. "So, that was why I could absorb Divine Spark to empower myself while the Headmistress is suffering for centuries," I noted after taking the risk of absorbing the transformed Spark, feeling a small yet noticeable improvement in my body.

I repeated the experiment a couple of times, only to notice the more intense the Tantric qualities of the mana I pushed, the quicker the transformation process was, removing any doubt whether the Tantric skill that was responsible.

Fascinating.

I would have loved to continue experimenting, but after a few more tests, I had managed to deplete all the Divine Spark I had managed to pilfer from the headmistress — though luckily, didn't let it go to waste, most of it going to my body to reinforce it further while the some consumed by the System, hopefully enough to avoid further embargo to my leveling. With that, I needed to stop the experimentation until the next day.

Unfortunately, that didn't mean I was free to do whatever I wanted until the next day. I still had to visit the experimentation room that was built for me by the courtesy of the Princess, not to mention I needed to reveal the mystery behind her aide's sudden level up and change of skills. Yet, as I summoned my air elemental once more, I couldn't help but sigh exhaustedly. I was trying to deal with too many different things.

Getting strong had its own disadvantages.

After another travel, I was back at Silver Spires, walking toward the temporary Royal residence once more, curious whether I could integrate the discovery about the impact of the Tantric

Mana on the storage artifact I was trying to create — though that would have been challenging to do without being caught by one of the many spying wards and spells they had integrated into the room.

“Please sir, this way,” said the guard, a marked difference from the way they had greeted me the day prior. Clearly, their instructions had been renewed. “Lady Dalia is waiting for you at her rooms for breakfast before you start working, sir.”

“Excellent,” I said, nodding to the guard before I walked inside, following a maid who led me to another corridor, until she opened a door, and revealing an opulent room — too opulent, even, especially considering that it was a temporary room.

“Please take a seat, sir, Lady Delia must be here in a minute,” she said, waiting at the door, waiting for me to get inside before she closed the door. Interestingly, she stayed outside, leaving me alone in the room.

Interesting choice, I thought even I glanced around the room, taking a more detailed record of the opulent scene. Yet, as I glanced carefully, at my Perception, it didn’t take long to realize the opulence was more of a foil than actual richness.

The golden statue on the corner was just gold-plated, the silverware that radiated a sense of magic, but it was not a permanent enchantment or enhanced during forging, but just a simple spell to fake value, though it was good enough to avoid my attention if I hadn’t been looking carefully.

And they were not the only detail. Every single painting in the room, every piece of furniture, every plate was enhanced with spells, spells that had been cast just minutes ago. To their credit, they were cast expertly, more than enough to trick anyone that didn’t have my phenomenal Stats and breadth of magical abilities.

They were fake nonetheless.

Luckily, the delicious spread of breakfast food that covered the table was not fake, filling my nose with its delicious smell. It was certainly a feast worthy of the Royal family. Interestingly, there was no maid to serve the food — not that I cared about it, but it was an interesting break from the image of opulence they were trying to reflect.

When another door opened, and Delia entered, I understood the reason. “Sorry for the delay,” the busty blonde said as she entered the room, wearing a beautiful dress, one that was far too revealing to be appropriate wear. It was a delicious red dress, with a cleavage deep enough to

reveal she wasn't wearing a corset, along with a deep slit that covered the side of the dress that implied the same for her panties.

Yet, despite the beauty of the sight, it wasn't the thing that caught my attention.

No, it was the notification I had received.

[Level Difference of five or more! No Experience]

What an interesting development, realizing that her level had changed once more, this time dropping below the target. I couldn't help but feel curious about which skills I would find once I tapped into her soul space.

"N-not a problem," I said, making a show of stammering as I let my gaze stuck on what her deep cleavage was displaying, deep enough to reveal the ghost of her areolas, my attention enough to deepen her smile.

With the way she dressed, her reaction was hardly a surprise.

"Still, my apologies," she whispered throatily as she walked forward, her hips shaking beautifully with each step, the allure radiating off her almost taking a physical presence, to a level that would have been impossible without significant assistance from her Charisma, one that was enhanced further by a few select skills. "I shouldn't have kept such an exalted guest waiting."

I couldn't wait to discover the exact configuration of skills she had to display such an aura of seduction.

I gulped loudly. "N-nonsense," I stammered even as I took a step back, doing my best to look shocked, curious just how far she would push in her little game, and whether I could ferret out the reason why she had escalated her seduction game.

"Whatever you say," she said, her smile confident as she leaned forward over the table to reach a plate, enhancing her already scandalous cleavage even more. "Let me prepare a plate for you..."

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000]

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Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 8000 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Eighty-Two

The sight Dalia created as she leaned over the table ‘carelessly’ as she put together a plate for me was beautiful even without factoring the way her dress failed against the attraction of the gravity. And the way her breasts continued to defy that attraction determinedly just enhanced the view further, competed by a momentary glimpse of her nipples, beautifully hard in anticipation.

Even as I enjoyed the sight, however, a stab of annoyance remained.

After all, with her level low enough to give me that dreaded notification once more, there was no additional experience to make the moment even sweeter.

I kept my mouth shut, ignoring that annoyance as I did my best to look dominated under her alluring assault.

Instead, I focused on the next issue. I had no idea about the exact skill configuration she had, which meant I had no idea exactly how accurate her observation was to catch the truth behind my actions. And since I was at a point that didn’t require taking any big risks, I decided to act conservatively. Not that I expected her to actually succeed in her observations, as there was a limit to the number of skills she could take, and if her level was low enough, she could hardly get enough observation skills in place to catch me.

Not with the number of skills she already had to optimize her seduction capability.

“T-thank you,” I stammered as she put the plate in front of me — and giving an even more impressive glimpse of her cleavage in the process. My mouth gaping, I did my best to give her the reaction she was working for, thoroughly enjoying being on the other side of such a radical seduction attempt.

As she pulled back, she dragged her finger ‘accidentally’ over my hand, unaware that she had given me the opportunity to slip a single point of mana into her body by doing so, giving me the opportunity I was looking for to examine her soul space safely.

A single point of mana wasn’t enough to get a complete understanding, but since I was unaware of just how many magical talents she possessed at the moment, I decided to stay on the safe side.

And it turned out to be a smart thing to do, because her current skill set was roughly divided

into three distinct categories.

The first group was, quite predictably, seduction, which didn't come as a surprise thanks to her already displayed abilities. The second category was geared for magical ability, mostly Arcana with some enchanting support, making me glad that I didn't get too aggressive to analyze her soul space. The combination of magical skills she had would work well to catch a magical flare, especially combined with her remaining skills.

The last category was enhanced observation. Though, surprisingly, that part was not as strong as I expected considering her objective, leaving her very capable of catching magical tricks, but less capable of catching the mundane tricks.

Interesting, I thought. Maybe she was convinced that she had already seen my secrets. Or maybe, was more afraid of me using a magical trick on her. Yet, that thought wasn't enough to prevent a momentary frown, because that wasn't enough to explain her choice.

The limited observation, along with her magical focus, was certainly suspicious, leaving me with one important question.

Why she had decided to maintain such a high level of magical ability? Her still being afraid of me was an option, but it was certainly not enough. It was the case, she would have maintained at least one weapon skill and some physical stats to prevent a more direct attack, yet those were completely absent.

Another change in the already complicated game her boss was playing, enough to make me tense.

Yet, as I watched Delia taking the chair nearest to me, I decided to leave that question to a different time. It was impossible to get an answer to every single question, after all.

Luckily, the way she crossed her legs, enhancing her already impressive slit even further to was beautiful enough to compensate for the mission-related annoyance.

I let my gaze fall on the amazing length of her legs, enjoying the delicious sight, happy that the role I was playing allowed me to do so without bothering to hide my gaze. She threw a dismissive yet amused glare my way, thinking I was too distracted with her legs to notice it.

How amusing, I thought, enjoying her silence as I took the first bite from the delicious breakfast spread that had been prepared for me. "Amazing," I said after swallowing.

“I’m happy to hear that,” she answered with a teasing slowness. The soft giggle that followed showed she had no intention of hiding that teasing intention.

Not that it was possible to hide that intention in the first place.

She said nothing to follow her words while I enjoyed the food, the fork occasionally freezing in place when she shuffled slightly to give an even better view of her beautiful body, the impressions enhanced further by her seduction-based skills.

Since I was supposed to be shocked by her beauty too much to actually speak, I said nothing else, not that it was too much of a problem with the perfect view of her entire leg peeking through the slit of her dress.

The contrast of her flawless skin against the crimson dress was simply mesmerizing.

My gaze danced between her amazing cleavage and her stunning legs, curves battling with smoothness, occasionally straying higher to get a glimpse of her slender neck.

When she spoke once more, I had been enjoying the sight of her deep cleavage for quite a while. She had raised her arms to reach something, ‘coincidentally’ covering her cleavage for a moment, and I leaned deliberately to catch a better view.

“Sorry,” she said with a growing smile. “I’m not in your way, am I?”

“Uh... No,” I said, once again making a show of stammering like I had been just caught reaching for the cookie jar. Yet, I didn’t stop staring at her body, showing her that the temptation of her body was stronger than the shame her words generated.

I was really curious about what was driving her to such a thing, so I did everything I could do other than actually saying to her directly I was hooked.

Yet, she kept her mouth shut, not taking the opportunity to mock me, which made me even more curious about what was the objective of this surprise breakfast. Why was she delaying it that much when I was giving her all the indications that I was ready to eat out of her hand?

And when she spoke, it wasn’t to unravel that mystery. “Have you tried the honey pastries, they are truly delicious,” she whispered even as she stood, preparing me on another plate.

Since when she sat down once more, she pulled her chair even closer, enough ‘carelessly’ to extend her hand to my lap, I assumed that pastries were just an excuse.



Her playful smile was masterful, naughty, yet with enough innocence mixed in to convince a lesser man that her touch might not mean what he thought it would, keeping things in suspense, which was more difficult to manage than it sounded.

It was too easy to look condescending while trying to give such a complicated impression.

I leaned forward even as I took a bite from the pastries they had picked for me, following it with a gulp of tea. And just as she said, they were delicious, but that wasn't all that.

They were also poisonous!

What an interesting choice, I thought even as I carefully flared my magic internally to grab the offending liquid that had been in the heart of the pastry, one that was only started working when it was combined with the touch of the tea, wrapping it safely, all without Delia noticing.

Despite the subtle web of magic that started spreading from her a few seconds later.

That magic, along with the subtle tightening of her face finally revealed the reason for her magical skill selection, at least partially. She wanted to make sure I had been affected by whatever poison she had fed to me.

Too bad for her she had woefully mistaken about the limits of my magical skills. I had managed to trick people that were much more competent than her magically, both in terms of level and skill focus, and in terms of magical dedication.

[-94 Mana]

I was able to shield the mana flare even as I cast a Biomancy spell, amused by the fact that she was unaware that she had tried to poison a Biomancy master, which was, arguably, an even worse attempt to poison a healer, like Marianne.

Not that Marianne would have a problem negating the effects of the poison, but I doubted she could compete with me in terms of analyzing the poison. So, by a flare of magic, not only I was able to block whatever plan Delia had by poisoning me, but also I would understand how the poison would exactly to destroy her plan even further.

I acted like there was nothing extraordinary going on as I took another pastry, once again followed by the tea to understand how it was working.

Luckily, it wasn't a deadly poison, which gave me a reason to hold back any aggressive

response.

Although, not using a deadly poison wasn't a huge surprise. Even if they wanted to kill me, Poison was hardly a reliable tool to deal with anyone higher than level ten due to a combination of high HP — though due to low Constitution, mages were more vulnerable against such methods even in high levels.

Even for mages, however, there were very few poisons that could reliably kill a level twenty mage, especially ones that could be delivered without excruciating pain to warn about their presence.

Her lack of a reaction as I continued to eat calmly suggested that the poison she had used wasn't one of those destructive ones, confirming I had sufficient time to work on the poison.

For others, deciphering the nature of an unknown poison was difficult without any tools, I had two distinct advantages over other experts. One, my great magical abilities that included Biomancy, second, my high Constitution and HP, giving me the freedom to let the poison affect me slightly, testing the poison through its workings as well as its magical nature.

With that, before I even finished eating the second pastry, I was able to identify the nature of her trick, only to realize classifying it as the poison was pushing.

It was more accurate to define it as concentrated alcohol, mixed with some mild aphrodisiac, the dosage perfect to affect a caster with low Constitution and a high level.

The perfect combination to impair an already horny high-leveled mage's decision-making even further without turning collapsing them.

How interesting.

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#### SKILLS

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Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Eighty-Three

I was curious what kind of objective led her to decide that getting me drunk in the particular way she decided to employ was a good idea. She didn't give me any sign about the reason as she limited herself to leaning back, watching me smugly.

I continued to eat the pastries she had prepared with great 'effort', giving her the opportunity she needed to speak.

Though, I had to admit that, enjoying the carefully-prepared breakfast while she shuffled in her seat carefully to maximize the impact of her beauty was a pleasant affair despite her trick. She certainly had the instincts to cultivate an aura of seduction, and with the assistance of the skills she had picked, it turned into an amazing show.

Almost enough to forgive her attempt to manipulate me with some direct, adulterated assistance.

Almost.

I waited until our eyes met, and smiled. "The breakfast is delicious," I murmured, though I avoided slurring, not wanting to give her the impression that the pastries she prepared were too effective.

I wanted to enjoy the process.

"I'm happy to hear you like it," Delia said.

"Oh yeah," I told her even as I glanced down, getting a very interesting angle down the loose dress she had worn for my pleasure, the angle particularly spectacular.

Her smile promised me a lot of interesting things.

But, since she was yet to make a move to deliver one of those promises, I decided to act proactively. After all the effort, I deserved an advance. I leaned to the side, and before she could react, my arm was already around her waist, and pulled her onto my lap.

The slight widening of her eyes as I moved faster than she expected was beautiful, but when my arm was wrapped around her waist, she made no move to pull back, instead of giggling playfully. It was an artificial move, her hand already on my chest — giving her an excuse to push me away a bit while still maintaining intimate physical contact.

A beautiful attempt. Too bad I had no intention of allowing her to succeed. The exact nature of her trickery went a long way to prevent me from doing so, no matter how amused I was, dealing with someone else trying to use my tricks on me.

“So,” I whispered into her ear as I pulled her closer, a touch harder than necessary to suggest while I wasn’t drunk enough to slur, I was drunk enough to lose control of my strength slightly — the fake strength I had convinced her that I had, of course, as my real strength was not something she could handle, even playfully. “Tell me, what do you want?”

“Want...” she said, stammering, caught surprised at my sudden words, especially with my lips close enough to brush against her. Flustered, for a moment I had thought she was about to deny needing anything. She picked a different direction. “Why do you think I want something?”

A simple yet smart way to deflect. Not admitting anything, yet not committing to not asking the favor yet as well. Of course, there were many ways to bypass such an argument, but I decided to have mercy on her. “Well, the amazing breakfast you had prepared for me was one clue...”

Then, before she could say anything, I grabbed the front of her dress, and pulled. It wasn’t a hard pull, but it wasn’t a sturdy dress either, easily rippling to reveal her breasts. I grabbed one of the spectacular globes that were revealed completely, and whispered again. “And, the dress is not bad as far as the clues yet.” A smirk popped to my face. “Sorry, was.”

She tensed, but forced a giggle quickly to hide that tenseness. “Well, I need something...” she murmured, her voice turning beautifully seductive after the initial tremble. Clearly, whatever she had in mind was more important than the presence of my dancing fingers, clamping around her nipple.

“Oh, really?” I whispered as I twisted her nipple, using the opportunity to sneak some more mana into her body to examine her. And I kissed her neck, making her tremble, which allowed me to be even more reckless.

[-216 Mana]

The moan that escaped, far too melodic and soft to be fake, was delicious. Unfortunately, I had other things to focus on. Arriving at her soul space, I turned my attention to its unique structure even more carefully to understand how exactly she could change her skills that easily.

The first thing I checked was the authenticity of it, afraid that she might be using a fake soul space. Yet, examining carefully, I could feel the connection her Skills had with her soul space. Meaning, it wasn’t a fake.

At least, not the way I had created it, I corrected myself as continued to examine it, only to notice the skills weren't as static as they were supposed to be. Instead, there was a sense of shuffling and lessening.

Like an ice cube, slowly melting under the sun, melting, so was the mana that created it was melting slowly.

How interesting, I thought even as I continued examining it. It wasn't a quick process, one that required only minutes to complete, but even by a simple estimation, it was certain that it wouldn't last a week.

And it would certainly lose its effectiveness to work as a skill in a shorter time, though, on that, being more accurate was rather difficult. I tried to poke it with my own mana, but noticing it hardly helped the stability of the skill, I had to pull back.

I didn't want to risk revealing my hand just yet.

With that, I pulled back from her soul space, making a note to examine that later. But since my mana was already inside, it would have been a waste to let that mana disperse. Instead, I started to infuse that mana into her body carefully, to trigger her arousal.

After all, she earned her treatment with the trick she had tried to pull.

My trick sounded simple, but casting a spell on a mage's body while keeping them unaware was certainly not a simple task. It stretched my abilities to the limit, and even then, it was a task that would take a while.

Luckily, I had some proper entertainment to distract me. "Delicious," I whispered as I squeezed her breast once more, amused by the tightness of her moan, one that was much more honest than before.

Though, the intensity surprised me. Even with my mana beginning to assist, it was an intensity that I hadn't been expecting from an experienced woman.

Which was rather interesting, especially with the smoothness of her earlier flirting, suggesting that, despite using that as a strategy many times, she had never let things come to such a point. Which was, on the one hand, showed just how good she was when it came to seduction, getting whatever she wanted by just dangling the possibility without paying the bill in the end.

On the other hand, it showed just how badly she needed whatever she was searching for, even

more than the Divine Spark storage I had been developing for them if her commitment was any indicator.

“Tell me,” I whispered, feeling curious. “Is your princess is aware of what you’re doing here, or it’s just a freelancing request, only for you.”

Her eyes widened, displaying fear and panic. Pity her amazing acting abilities were not enough to hide their artificial nature, giving me the answer she had been searching for. She wasn’t afraid that her ploy had been revealed, which meant the princess was aware of it.

Or at a minimum, she was confident the princess wouldn’t care about it.

“It’s only for me, but it’s very important,” she begged as her hands landed on my neck. “Please don’t tell anyone, not even the princess.”

“Mm,” I murmured, my smirk getting wider. “And what if I need something to keep my mouth shut.”

“Maybe a kiss,” she murmured as she leaned forward, her tongue darting out to caress my lips before hers connected, her tongue slipping inside my mouth. I let her tongue dance according to her wishes before I retaliated, our assaults clashing for a moment before she found the situation completely reversed.

The kiss was delicious, though not enough for me to focus all my attention on it. Instead, I focused my attention on my mana, intent on triggering her mana even further, to use her distraction.

... only for my eyes to widen in shock. Luckily, I was better at acting than her to disguise my shock, and it survived on my face only for a fraction of a second before it disappeared.

However, the same didn’t remove the reason for my shock. I had noticed that, over her skin, there was a whole layer of mana, almost like a second skin. I couldn’t help but feel impressed, because it was subtle.

Subtle enough to avoid my attention despite our closeness.

I couldn’t help but frown at the impressiveness of the achievement. I was an expert on magic, and my stats allowed me to have unmatched flexibility. Yet, despite spending so much time with her over several days, I had failed to notice it.

Or did I, I suddenly corrected my thoughts. After all, I had failed to notice her disguise. What guarantee there was that I had been dealing with Delia on previous days...

Yet another mystery to solve.

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

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Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 7810 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration



Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Eighty-Four

The sensation that immediately followed the realization that I had been tricked was an interesting feeling. A part of that was no doubt unpleasant, like being hit by a surprise water attack without the slightest hint.

Yet, just like water hitting one's face in the middle of a hot summer day, it was invigorating. With everything that was happening, I was starting to believe that, at least in Silver Spires, everything was under my control. And being wrong on that aspect was dangerous, but there was one thing certain.

It was not boring.

As I continued kissing her, I carefully examined the structure that kept her face hidden, careful not to disrupt the structure, trying to understand the difference it had caused.

The first thing I noticed when I expanded the energy was that her face wasn't the only thing that was behind that disguise. Her body was also affected. The good news was the changes were pretty minimal, just enough to bring me a particular memory.

The princess, stepping out of her carriage with four other handmaidens, each looking eerily similar.

Maybe there was more to the princess' choice of handmaiden than just aesthetics. It would certainly help to use them interchangeably depending on the situation, especially with the freedom to adjust their skills.

I wondered which of the four handmaiden's mouths I was currently ravaging mercilessly, before pulling back a few seconds later, giving her a chance to catch her breath. For a given value of pulling back, as one of my hands still lingered on her back, preventing her from moving back, while the other was still on her breast, caressing and squeezing in equal measures.

To her credit, even under the assault of pleasure, she managed to keep her objective in mind. "About my request..." she whispered.

"Yes," I murmured before leaning forward, stealing a lingering kiss from her neck. "About your request..."

"We need a little help, from a brave soul who's proficient in combat. Someone better than the average soldiers in our employ."

“Oh, I would have thought the Royal Procession would have enough elite soldiers to handle such a threat?” I said, though made sure to sound like I was making a dig rather than an actual question, while still forcing her to explain.

“We have good soldiers, but true elite... They are hard to find, and even harder to convince,” she answered, her voice beautifully gaspy, the way she gently caressed my cheek leaving no doubt about exactly what she had been talking about.

It caught my attention, leaving me curious about the reason for going that much effort into just asking for some military assistance. One thing was certain. The explanation she implicitly gave, that it was just a regular mission from the Princess, was a lie.

If I wasn't aware of their unique ability to change their skills, adapting to their need, I might have believed that they lacked a true combatant even after seeing the impressive performance of their thief, but knowing that they have a modular ability to adjust their skills, that was clearly not the case.

Which meant that the situation wasn't as simple as requiring a strong combatant. It could be a personal plan from Delia — or not-Delia, if we were being accurate — trying to use me for a personal project without asking the Princess, though I didn't believe that.

A part of that was the fact that she had optimized her skills before arriving. And while it was technically possible that whatever they were using to change their skills was something they could use without alerting the Princess, it wasn't very possible.

They wouldn't let such a dangerous strategical tool casually accessible.

And, even if changing her skills without asking the Princess was possible, she wouldn't have handled that operation in Delia's room, when all the guards had noted my presence here. Not the most concealed way.

Which meant the operation was approved by the Princess, and they wanted me to handle a mission that they could do themselves. I was sure they could do it themselves. I didn't have any indication that they were as strong as me, but they were certainly stronger than the strength and combat capability I had displayed for them as one of the ancillary members of the headmistress' team.

Maybe it was the danger, so they preferred to send a nominal ally than one of their members. Technically, I might have assumed the critical work they had assigned me would be enough to remove the possibility of a betrayal — but the more I learned about their interesting disguise

abilities and fake skills, the less I trusted that possibility.

Their ability was not limitless. If that was the case, they wouldn't have bothered to reach out to an expert for their crafting process. However, my own experience with crafting and magic gave me the reason why they did, coming up with a design from the scratch using a ruined artifact was not a simple affair.

Modifying a design from a working starting point, however, was much simpler.

Of course, sacrificing myself in a desperate mission was not the only possibility. There were many other possibilities, including the fact that the attack might be a perfectly ordinary mission, and they were using it as an excuse to pull me tighter into their faction, but without more information, it was impossible to determine.

Luckily, the source of information was too far away. "Hmm, tell me about this mission," I asked her, but rather than listening carefully, I leaned forward to catch her nipple between my lips, my tongue lashing out freely.

"It— it's a secret before you accept it," she whispered. "But it's not dangerous."

"Of course, it's not dangerous," I bragged as I pulled back to play the role of a drunk perfectly, leaving the task of teasing her nipples to my fingers momentarily. "I'm the greatest mage this school has ever seen. Nothing can threaten me. But I'm curious about the reason for it."

"Still—" she started, only to explode into another moan as my mouth returned to its primary task, this time with the assistance of my teeth, leaving a nice mark on her breast. "I can't talk about the mission before I get the approval of the Princess, and bring the news of your agreement. The mission is too vital."

"Hmm," I whispered. "Still, I'm sure there's no harm giving me a few details off the record, right? Like what kind of enemy that I need to kill. Monsters, undead, enemy warriors? Give me something, beautiful."

"I'm sorry," she managed to say between her moans as my fingers continued mounting their assault on her beautiful breasts, testing their spectacular sensitivity to the limit. "But my lips are sealed. I can't betray the secrets of the Princess."

Interestingly, despite everything, I managed to catch a hint of amusement in her tone. For some reason, those last words were clearly a joke, one that was impressive enough to get a place in her voice even as she was moaning repeatedly.

Pity I had bigger priorities than understanding that particular humorous note, such as interrogating her.

In an enhanced manner.

Suddenly, without a warning, I put my arm on the table, and swept all the dishes to the side. And as the crash of the broken porcelain reached my ear, I was busy pushing her on the table, the slit of her dress giving me an easy way to rip the rest of that beautiful dress off her body, leaving her completely naked.

“Oh, I’m sure I could get at least a small hint off you, enough to count as a favor to a good friend, at least,” I whispered even as I put my hands on her legs, parting her legs.

I felt a hint of panic off her, only to disappear when I leaned forward, bringing my lips nearer to her nether ones. She was clearly unwilling to take that full step for her mission, but had no problems with some oral assistance.

How cute.

“I ... can’t,” she murmured, but one that was tinged with tenseness and anticipation at the same time as I completed my small journey, my tongue touching against her knob, dancing softly. The moan that escaped her pouty lips was simply phenomenal.

“Come on, Delia,” I said after a few brushes even though I knew it was not her name. “Just a hint. A word of clue. A little gift between friends. What’s the harm.”

I glanced at her as she put her elbows on the table and propped up her torso a bit, allowing her to look for me. And, as an added benefit, it enhanced the already spectacular view her breasts were providing even further.

Yet, the sharp gaze she had displayed as she studied me through narrowed eyes and thick, long lashes was even more arousing. It was a challenge, a signal of rebellion, one that triggered my instincts to break that rebellion through pleasure, making her mewl for hours and hours until she had turned into an obedient servant.

Pity that was not an option with the character I was playing. Even my current actions were pushing the envelope.

The magical drunkenness was an excuse, but only up to a certain point.

I wondered if she was aware of just how attractive her gaze was, enough to make me consider abandoning my plans to play the overconfident patsy. If it wasn't for the latest discoveries about the disguise that suggested their faction was even more mysterious than their ability to modify their skill selection, I might have actually abandoned the ploy to test just how much effort it would take to erase that particular expression from her beautiful face.

The expression was attractive, because unlike everything else, it was not an act, but a reflection of her true feelings, her true core, making it a thoroughly maddening addition to our game.

Just the thing I needed to make our game entertaining....

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 8000 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

## PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Eighty-Five

I acted like I missed the sudden sharpness not-Delia's gaze as I leaned forward, pressing my lips against her wetness. A guttural moan escaped her throat despite her best effort, throaty and rich, the kind that would have awakened my arousal if that task hadn't been already completed by her unlimited beauty.

When she looked me back again, after half a minute where she did her best to watch the ceiling, her face was marked with frustration.

Not the frustration of disappointment. Even if I was keeping my abilities restricted to avoid any pesky suspicion that might ruin my plan, her disappointment would have hurt my little fragile male pride.

Luckily, it wasn't that particular flavor, but a more familiar kind of frustration, the kind that a beautiful lady carried while she tried to keep her moans of pleasure suppressed despite her body begging for a release of the pressure.

An expression that I was intensely familiar with.

I had been thinking about pulling back to ask my questions again about the mission she was trying to push for me, but seeing just how decisive she was as she was trying to keep her moans down, I decided to stay once more. Teasing my mysterious adversary was just too tempting to reject.

And it wasn't like my current task was an unbearable chore.

Watching a beautiful busty blonde twist and squirm under my tongue was always a pleasure, so I let my tongue dance aggressively around her knob, each twirl designed to trigger a soft moan off her beautiful lips. Yet, she managed to defy that order for a time long enough to give me a surprise.

Yet, five minutes of dedicated assault was enough to finally break her determination, and a moan escaped her beautiful lips, signaling the perfect opportunity to ask questions about the mission.

I continued licking her delicious core.

Her moans continued, only to be interrupted by question a couple minutes later. "Weren't you about to ask me questions ... about the mission," she whispered, her voice tense with pleasure.



I raised my head, just enough to catch her expression, a beautiful mixture of anger and pleasure hidden behind a fake layer of confusion, one that she doubtlessly expected to trick me.

“Well, I was, but since you seem to be so determined keeping it a secret, I decided to respect your decision,” I said, though considering my hands were still on her thighs as I said that, pushing her legs wide, it was hardly the most convincing argument. Luckily, we were currently not in a position that required a flexible tongue.

A metaphorical flexible tongue, of course, as the literal flexibility was much more important as I leaned down once again to tease her wetness with maddeningly rhythmic brushes.

Pity I couldn't watch her expression simultaneously, though the way her body was trembling had given me enough material to imagine the way it flickered, her mouth open, her tongue flickering out to moisten her lips repeatedly.

Of course, I wasn't completely impervious of the effects of my actions as well. My cock was throbbing at this point, imprisoned helplessly in my pants, enough to make me consider freeing them. Yet, I suppressed that desire, as getting naked would make her think that I was pushing for the next stage.

A stage that she was clearly not ready yet.

So, I continued, amused by the plight I had forced myself in. I continued teasing her core, doing my best to push her to a climax. Under my skilled assault — even if it was limited enough to maintain my false facade — it didn't take long for her to start trembling intensely, providing me with the telltale signs of a beautiful climax.

The kind that rewarded my efforts with a sweet explosion.

Yet, even as she started breathing hard to get rid of the after-effects of her climax, I didn't give her any space to recover, my tongue continuing its assault with a renewed passion, almost reaching the point of displeasing. Luckily, I knew exactly where to stop to her torture sweet and beautiful, the discomfort staying the kind that would maintain its unique nature.

After all, I had the pride of an expert...

It didn't take long for her to realize that I had no intention of stopping, so, I watched as she raised her head, barely able to look me into her eye as she tried to limit the signs of frustrated pleasure behind a fake layer of euphoria.

“M-maybe I could give you a few clues about the mission,” she stammered.

Trying to watch her as she tried to hide an expression of pleasure behind another expression of pleasure was amusing, even though I didn’t underestimate the nature of her actions. She was doing her best to hide her frustration by a layer of euphoria, because she wanted me to believe that she was speaking because I had managed to extract that from her.

Meaning, she was already planning to share that information beforehand.

“Before we left the capital, a precious amulet of Her Highness had been lost to the sticky fingers of a thief, and she needs someone to retrieve it. It’s precious, because it’s one of the few gifts the late Queen had bequeathed to her before her unfortunate demise.”

“Hmm,” I said even as I pulled my head back, but still, I kept my fingers over her core, dancing at the entrance softly, not letting the assault lessen. “And should I assume the Princess wants me to travel to the Capital to find among the rats that skulk in the shadows.” I pushed my chest out proudly. “I’m a great mage, not someone that could suffer the insult dealing with that kind of rats. And if that lazy—“ I started, before forcibly correcting my words, suggesting that I was drunk enough to almost insult the Princess in front of her loyal servant before correcting myself.

“And if Her Highness thinks that I would do such a thing, she’s mistaken,” I corrected myself, trying to force a respectful tone, but deliberately adding a sharp undertone to show a wounded pride.

It was as intentional as her attempt to look lost in pleasure. It wasn’t the first time, but I wanted to remind both her and the Princess that I was too prideful, to the point of being easily manipulated.

Giving a false weakness was much better than letting them searching for a real weakness.

Who knew what they might find if they started skulking around?

“Don’t worry, Her Highness respects you immensely. You’re not only a great mage, but also a great blacksmith that could create miracles with nothing but his mana and his hands. How could she just send you deal with that kind of riffraff. No, her agents managed to track the location of the item.”

“Better,” I said. “Do you have any idea where? I can’t help her if it’s in a distant location. I have important tasks I have to handle in the school, and I doubt the Princess could convince the

headmistress to allow a leave longer than a day.”

“Unfortunately—“ she started, only for a moan to escape as I flicked her knob, my fingers steadily working on her entrance to push her deeper into the pleasure. “Unfortunately, I don’t know where it is, but I’m sure Her Highness would meet you to explain. May I—“ she continued, only to be interrupted by another moan as my fingers twisted beautifully.

“May you, what?” I asked mockingly even as I looked at her face, amused by the flicker of annoyance that climbed to the surface before drowning among the waves of pleasure.

There were certainly perks to the role I was playing, especially with the excuse of being drunk enough to be reckless.

“May I tell Her Highness that you accept the mission? I’m sure she would reward you immensely.”

“You may, as long as she can give me enough reward to make it worth my time, of course,” I said, seemingly dismissively as I leaned down once more to press my tongue against her wet core for a bit more, before pulling back.

“I’m willing to meet with the Princess whenever it’s convenient for her,” I said as I stood up, deliberately leaving her on the edge. A little punishment for her daring. It might have been constituted as out-of-character for my role as the arrogant mage, so I decided to add one last sentence before leaving.

“And if you want to continue our ... discussion...” I said, letting my smirk gain a salacious yet confident reflection. “Feel free to visit my room. I would appreciate the opportunity to take a break.”

With that, I left the room, leaving a sexy, naked blonde panting as she lay on the table.

Though, despite my words, I was yet to truly accept that mission. The reason, the subtle smile of victory that danced on her lips, reminding me of an assassin that successfully sank a dagger in the heart of her target.

A reaction that was more intense than I had expected from a servant.

Even more interestingly, even as that expression passed through her face, her eyes lost their focus, suggesting that it wasn’t me that she was stabbing.

I was just the dagger...

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499110 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

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Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

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HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 8000 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [77/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Eighty-Six

As I left the room, leaving the beautiful girl disguised as Delia behind, I had to suppress the temptation to swing back and see the mystery hidden behind the impressively-complicated magical disguise. It was out of character for me to leave such a mystery unattended despite the opportunity, but, ultimately, the time it took for me to discover her extraordinary disguise and changing skills stopped me.

They clearly had abilities that I was not privy to, so, any attempt to break through the veil of mystery was simply an unnecessary risk.

Instead, I returned to the room they had created for me for some more experimentation, curious whether I could create storage that could enhance Tantric mana's ability to somehow destroy Divine Spark's nature, to the point of weaponization. Although, with the number of magical observation methods they had integrated into the room, it was going to be a true challenge.

Such a waste, I thought even as I stepped into the laboratory. I had an impressive number of priceless equipment and materials to work with, yet I had to limit my research significantly because I was afraid of a surprise detection ward they might have placed. "What a pity," I murmured as I washed my face, the cold water giving me the jolt I needed to focus for a day filled with hard work, experimentation, and careful espionage.

The presence of constant observation was not doubtful. Even without any hidden motive, the room was like a treasury, only less defended. I could hardly blame them for trying to protect it, or their attempt to maximize the benefit they were getting from me.

It was time to work. First, I grabbed several alloy samples, and flooded them with mana, establishing some simple strengthening enchantments on them.

[-25 Mana]

Then, I flared my mana again, triggering the device that rested in the center of the room. A rotating magical field appeared in the center of the room, a chaotic field that promised only pain for anyone that dared to step inside. The alloys floated on the surface of the device, slowly corroding and disintegrating.

It was a simple and boring experiment. I was trying to understand how certain enchantments worked on different alloys. The process was dull, because after the first set had finally

disintegrated, I grabbed another set of alloys, enchanted them, and threw them to the device to be destroyed slowly. All the while, I was working on a scroll, rolled open in front of me, a quill on my hand as I took detailed notes, filling the rest of the paper with the calculations, my mind filled with numbers and formulas.

The only trick, the formulas that were keeping my mind busy weren't the ones I was writing on the scroll in front of me.

The formulas and calculations on the paper certainly looked impressive, the kind that would challenge a magical expert with an Intelligence of twenty. Yet, for me, it was barely more than doing the sums.

The same didn't apply to the notes I was keeping on my mind.

From a distance, it looked like I was testing the performance of the alloys under different strengthening enchantments, but in reality, some of those enchantments were cast using ordinary mana, while others had a different mixture of Tantric mana mixed into their structure. Never overwhelmingly, as I wanted to avoid the attention of any observer, but just enough to see if using Tantric mana was making any difference.

It was vital to test after my latest discovery about Tantric's impact on different applications. I didn't want to be ambushed by another miraculous feature.

I cycled through the different enchantments, materials, and spells to test, my mind filled with endless calculations as I tried to understand the impact of Tantric. However, after three hours of detailed experimentation, I was yet to discover anything other than Tantric was bad for casting enchantments, lacking the rigidity to carry the weight of the magical effect I desired to inject.

[+7 Craft]

When I heard a knock on the door, almost four hours after I started experimenting, I was yet to discover anything wondrous. Welcoming a break, I waved my hand and the door opened, allowing the guest to step inside.

A blonde woman, dressed in leather armor, with an exquisite sword that radiated magic on her waist. I recognized her instantly, as she was one of the handmaidens that had been accompanying the princess, but this time, she wasn't wearing a dress but armor.

Well, at least at the surface. Without checking, it was hard to guess whether she was another

disguised member sent to talk with me.

“I hope I’m not disturbing you,” she spoke, though unlike her words, her voice was sharp with a challenge. I suppressed a sudden flash of sadness as her tone reminded me of Aviada, my unlucky lover who found herself on a dangerous journey.

“I was just finishing an experiment, no worries,” I said, turning to her with a big, salacious smile, once again the reputation as a lecher creating an excellent cover. “How can I help one of the precious handmaidens of the princess? Is there an emergency, or would I have the fortune to accompany you for leisure activity?”

Her sharp frustration at being flirted with was amusing, even if I suspected it was more acting than her actual feelings.

“No,” she said, managing to keep her voice even except for a little growl that infected it, her eyes pinning me down. “I heard that Her Highness had selected you for an important mission. I just wanted to spar with someone who had been selected for such a beautiful honor.”

“As a warrior?” I said, letting a tone of dismissiveness infect my tone. There was a reason mages were valued much higher than warriors in levels as high as the twenties. It was really difficult for a warrior to compete against the sheer burst potential of a mage.

There were certain advantages of warriors, of course, particularly their extended battle performance, but in a spar without any trick, the victory was given.

“Yes, as a warrior,” she growled, doing her best to her anger at being dismissed. Unfortunately for her, it seemed she didn’t have too many acting skills, because the fakeness of her emotion was apparent. She looked angry, but it lacked the existential frustration many high-leveled pure warriors carried after being dismissed by a mage. “I want to make sure you can handle such an important mission.”

Not surprising, as with their skill modification, she wouldn’t feel that fundamental frustration of being limited by their selection.

“As you wish,” I said, enthusiastic at the opportunity. I doubted that her aim was to get an accurate understanding of my combat abilities. If that had been the case, they would have found an excuse to test them before asking me to take the mission.

Yet, considering it gave me an excuse to use unlimited magic on her to better understand their tricks, I welcomed the opportunity regardless of their objectives.



Especially since she didn't seem to equip any magical ability to catch my tricks.

"Follow me, then," she said as she turned and started walking, the sudden flash of satisfaction rather interesting. I wondered about the exact reason.

"So," I murmured as I quickly caught up with her. "Don't tell me we're just going to have a boring spar?"

My frivolous words didn't generate much goodwill, but they needed me too much to react to that explosively as well. "What do you have in mind?" she asked.

"Well, maybe we can have dinner together?" I asked, and it earned a sharp look, though that sharpness was nothing compared to the one that followed it after I finished my sentence. "Maybe the same kind your friend Delia had delivered in the morning."

She said nothing, too busy containing the flare of anger. The anger was intense enough to confirm that she knew exactly what had happened during the breakfast, no doubt feeling insulted that I would ask for a similar service from her as well.

Even better, she couldn't just admit without revealing she already knew what had happened. Her lips, staying closed, implied that she didn't have the intention of revealing that particular nugget.

"Maybe, depends on how long you can resist," she said, doing her best to hide her anger. "Manage to spar with me for fifteen minutes, and I'll personally feed you dinner."

"Deal," I said smugly, even though inwardly, I knew it was much harder to follow that request. A high-leveled mage could defeat a high-leveled warrior easily, but an extended spar was a different deal. Most mages didn't have my advantage of rapid mana regeneration, meaning that, in any extended combat, they were at a great disadvantage. It would have been even more pronounced in a spar, where the mage wasn't allowed to deliver a deadly attack that would finish, allowing the warrior to be even more aggressive.

Yet, I couldn't reject the offer without destroying the thoughtless and braggart personality I created for them.

However, as I continued to walk deeper into the building, I realized that I might have bitten a bit more than I could chew. The reason, was I had decided to kill some time by focusing on the sway of her hips, the view of them clad in a leather prison beautiful, only to receive a notification.

[+50 Experience]

Just a notification of experience. No penalties, no reductions, nothing, meaning that she had a higher level than my actual level, let alone the surface weakness I had been displaying.

It took a lot to suppress the moan that tried to force itself into my face. Clearly, a painful sparring session awaited me.

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499160 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 8000 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [84/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

## PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Eighty-Seven

My concerns about a painful sparring session didn't get alleviated when we finally arrived at our destination.

Mostly, it was a standard sparring room. A huge, open area with no impediment, the floor covered in stone, each inch enchanted carefully for extra durability to resist the aggression of the high-leveled combatants, and several wards ready to be activated in case of a danger to prevent death.

Yet, the details shouted to me that it was going to be a painful battle. The level difference between her and my fake identity was already a given, but apparently, that wasn't enough for her because she had pushed for such an unfair area of battle.

Of course, at a glance, an underground arena with no obstruction seemed like the perfect place to have a fair duel between two high-leveled individuals, but that discounted one important fact. Every small detail of the arena was designed to enhance the advantages of the melee fighter and chip away at the perks of magic.

The size of the arena was the first big problem. It was not exactly small with an area of several hundred square feet area, but for a supernatural warrior, even the longest distance could be covered in less than a second. Combined with the height of the ceiling, just below fifteen feet, a distance that she could easily jump with halfway decent Strength and Speed stats, any movement advantage a mage might establish was completely gone.

The thick enchantments that covered every surface were another challenge, basically ruling out most of the elemental tricks. The earth spells were out directly, but even a glance was enough to show that it would also weaken any water or fire spell that they came into contact with, removing most of the spells that a mage could use for zoning away from the fighter.

So-called security wards were another trap. Ideally, they shouldn't trigger unless overwhelmingly powerful magic was used, but I had sufficient magical expertise to catch some last-minute adjustments on them. They would go off much easier than advised, wasting the mana of the mage, after which no doubt my opponent suggest that we continue.

The last confirmation about whether it was intentional was the several bottles of healing potions, each brewed freshly as indicated by their magical aura, no doubt there to keep me in fighting shape...

So that she could torture me longer.

I looked at her beautiful face with admiration as she stood at the opposite side of the room, raising a wooden stick — the only thing that could be classified as an advantage for me, as it was much less deadly than a sword or an ax, but I had a suspicion that the only reason she picked was to maximize the pain she inflicted.

“Are you ready?” she asked, doing her best to sound calm, but unable to hide her vicious anticipation, confirming that subterfuge was not one of the skills she had picked.

“No weapon for me?” I asked.

“I’m sure a big man like you wouldn’t need a clutch like that,” she suggested, her smile widening.

“Oh, someone was talking to her friend,” I answered with a wink, watching as her amusement turned into fury.

“Let’s begin,” she growled, and dashed forward without even waiting for an answer.

Damn, I thought even as I started moving, doing my best to stay under the limits of what was reasonable for a high-leveled mage even as I raised my hand, conjuring an arcana shield.

[-128 Mana]

Its purple glow didn’t survive for long, shattering at the impact, her impressive charge more than enough to deal with it — even if I hadn’t designed it to explode in the first place.

It was a shaped explosion, all its strength connecting with her. Yet, it didn’t delay her more than a fraction of a second, which wasn’t enough for the limited version to pull back. Her staff connected to my ribs, hitting hard enough to send me flying, and I hit against the wall.

[-138 HP]

“Try to be more attentive,” she said as she swung her staff, yet, despite sending me flying in a very undignified and painful unassisted flight, she was still angry.

Curious, I thought even as I made a show of standing up very slowly, even as I carefully used my mana remotely to test her soul space, to catch whether she was wearing a disguise. It was the real point of my exploding shield, letting some of my mana stick on her skin, using the broken shield as an excuse in case she had equipped any magical talent.

Yet, a glimpse into her soul space showed she had absolutely no magical talent, making me much more relaxed. So, rather than dispersing my mana, I let it stay in her soul space, getting a more detailed glimpse of her abilities.

She had a very high level, I realized as I started examining her soul space.

Forty-two!

I couldn't help but feel like it was a waste just to deal with me, because even a casual glance was enough to catch the mana evaporating from her soul space, much faster than not-Delia had been losing it earlier today. Not-Delia probably could have lasted almost a week with her skills — assuming the evaporation rate stayed constant, of course, which was not a given — but I would be greatly surprised if my current opponent could last even for a day.

Either it was a difference between recipients, or their target level made a huge difference. And considering they weren't always walking around in level forties and fifties, I was willing to bet that it was mainly the latter.

I was deliberately slow in standing up, to give myself time to think, but my opponent clearly had no intention of allowing that. "Ready, big boy?" she growled even as she dashed forward once more, forcing me to gather my mana hurriedly, yet receive the hit before I could actually cast it.

Of course, my shield was too late only because I was hiding my skills, but that didn't make the tip of her staff burying in my diaphragm any less painful. Yet, it prevented me from using that as an excuse to check her disguise.

[-23 HP]

The attack itself was not too damaging, as she clearly held herself back, but she more than compensated for it by choosing the potentially most powerful point to attack.

... one of the most painful, I corrected as I shifted my leg to prevent her knee from burying into the most sensitive and most important location in my body. I wanted to play along with her revenge fantasy, but I had my limits as well, and that area was at the forefront of that limits. After all, when other men said that it was their most important part, they were talking figuratively.

For me, it was literal.

Of course, defending my crotch in a timely manner didn't come freely. She had used our closeness to deliver a backhanded slap to me, an insulting move that was also strong enough to send me tumbling away.

"What happened, big boy," she growled vindictively. "Are you too tired?"

"Kind of," I murmured even as I pushed myself up to my feet, putting a smile despite the pain I was feeling — even with my endurance, getting that kind of hit from a high leveled warrior, doing her best to deliver as much suffering as she could manage was not free. "Your friend had really exhausted me that morning, begging for more."

And just like that, her anger, already burning bright, flared even more. This time, she dashed forward even more aggressively, swinging her staff even harder, mixing in occasional punches and kicks as needed, with a particular focus on my crotch.

I didn't allow her attacks to connect where she was clearly targeting the most, but that left the rest of my body only more vulnerable to her attacks, receiving a great number of attacks. None of them were particularly effective in terms of delivering damage, yet in terms of delivering pain, they were surprisingly effective.

[-103 HP]

Maybe she had a relationship with Delia, or not-Delia, the kind Marianne and Cornelia had before my intervention, and appreciated my involvement just as much as Cornelia had appreciated it in the beginning.

It was worthy to test.

"Come on sweetie, don't tell me you're having appropriate relations with Delia—" I suggested even as I dodge, or more accurately, started to suggest as I tried to dodge, only to receive a hit on my face.

Yet, despite the swift hit, I didn't notice any sudden reaction from her, suggesting that comment had missed wildly. She didn't even react to my comment as she continued to beat me. I decided to have another try.

"I know you're trying to protect your friend, but it's not your fault that she's a whore—" I tested, only to be interrupted by a sharp hit of her staff.

One that was much stronger than her other attempts, sending me flying away even as a

threatening notification popped in my gaze.

[-216 HP]

And that was with my last-minute correction to reduce the damage. If I had been as weak as I had been acting, that hit had a decent chance of actually killing me — something she realized as well.

“Damn, girl,” I murmured even as I pushed my mana aggressively out to slow my flight.

[-391 Mana]

Or, more accurately, using that as an excuse to flood the room, to check her disguise. Her absolute lack of reaction to my insinuation, combined with her explosive attitude toward the offhanded insult was too suspicious.

Yet, as my mana wrapped around her, checking her disguise, I met with a bigger surprise than I had been expecting...

I was fighting against my dear friend, not-Delia...

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499160 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 7659 / 8000 ]

SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]



Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [84/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Eighty-Eight

I couldn't help but smirk despite the pain as I realized I had been beaten black and blue by the same woman that had been moaning under the steady assault of my fingers after trying to get me drunk just hours ago.

The fact that her display of anger following her obedience in the morning gave an even more beautiful angle to it, especially since it suggested that the reason for her absurd reaction was less about the physical aspects of our adventure, and more about making my payback for her composure, thoroughly destroyed.

Of course, I had no evidence for the last aspect, but after the great number of encounters I had shared with several strong ladies with similar powerful backgrounds, I trusted my instincts to identify the exact nature of her feminine fury.

Pity that the sudden realization didn't prevent me from rolling to the side, panicked as she charged toward me, no doubt not appreciating the slowness I displayed as I stood up, still leaning against the wall to make it look like I was exhausted.

This time, I had been — mostly — successful in dodging despite the limits I was trying to display, because this time, her charge was deliberately slow, giving me the time to roll away. Yet, even as I got away, she continued to swing her weapon with her full strength.

Her staff hit the wall with a great crash, leaving a big crack in the wall despite all the enchantments woven into the structure to prevent that exact outcome.

"Maybe we should take a break for a health potion if you're going to swing your stick that hard," I said, pushing an expression of fear to my face as I looked at the dent it left, the presence enough to break some of the enchantments through brute force.

Someone was really angry about their earlier defeat.

"If you are not man enough to handle my strength," she said, followed by spitting on the floor, showing just how little she thought about me.

Admittedly, her attitude would have made me furious if it was the full extent of my capabilities she was insulting. Even now, it earned another big notch in the column that was keeping track of her eventual punishment. "Hey, don't insult my manhood," I fake-growled as I raised my hand, and a gesture later, one of the healing potions floated toward me.

I gulped it down. Its power started to stir — a particularly unpleasant mixture of fire and numbness — through my body, ready to cure my body. Their greater potential wasn't the only reason that people preferred healers over healing potions. The nasty after-effect it left was certainly a part of it.

I turned my magic inward, making sure there was no surprise addition to the healing potion.

[+143 HP]

There was no surprise hidden, showing me that not-Delia was determined to teach me a direct lesson rather than relying on trickery, confidence that her new skills.

Though, just because the healing potion was clean didn't mean the mana I gathered to check its content had nothing to do. Their short shelf life and their relatively limited impact compared to the healing spells wasn't the only reason for their rare usage. They also carried a lot of little impurities that could build up unless destroyed, though destroying them without any damage required a significant precision that most healers lacked.

[-9 Mana]

"Why shouldn't I?" she answered as I processed the healing potion, her smirk getting wider as she fell under the impression that she had gained the upper hand on our little competition.

An impression I was about to destroy with great enthusiasm.

"Because I'm exhausted," I said, my smirk getting wider. "You can blame your slutty friend if you want to blame someone. She really exhausted me during breakfast. She's truly insatiable, always asking for more—" I started, only to be interrupted as I threw myself to the side once more, forcing myself to avoid a thrown staff, one that buried itself on the wall.

My eyes widened in shock, this time genuine. Her move wasn't really dangerous for me.

For the fake level and capability I had been displaying, however...

"Come on, sweetie," I said as I rolled away, creating a ward around me, just in time to intercept her kick, one that held back her attack. "Just because your friend has loose morals doesn't mean you have the right to treat me with such aggression."

[-291 Mana]

That hardly helped her anger, delivering several rapid kicks that drained the strength of the

ward significantly — even though I cheated by casting the ward with a robustness that my fake identity shouldn't be able to display.

Luckily, the same anger prevented her from noticing that little detail, especially with the current skill configuration she had been sporting.

A chill suddenly hit me, though, this time, it was less about her sudden fit of anger, and more about her complete lack of ability to recognize the irregularity in my shield. She was a living example of just how much I had been depending on the System for power.

I needed to cut my dependency on my skills, and there was no better time to do that than now. As she swung her fist against the shield once more, I roused my mana and blocked my own skill temporarily — choosing elemental magic as my target.

Then, I tried to hit her back with a gust of wind to push her back, trying to force a distance between us.

[-218 Mana]

Using that much mana for a non-aggressive spell, especially with my stats strengthening the assault, was supposed to slam her against the wall hard enough to leave her silhouette on the wall. Instead, she took a few steps back, giving me just enough time to reinforce the shield I created.

The limited effect of the spell was interesting, especially since I still had a great understanding of how to cast complicated elemental spells. That part of my understanding hadn't been destroyed, yet I failed to cast the spell successfully.

It was like knowing the best way of traveling, optimal stops, the ideal pace, and the danger zones... Yet, if the ability to take a step disappeared immediately, all that knowledge went to waste, useless to apply.

I loosened the block, testing the rush of instinctual understanding that filled the gaps. With my Intelligence and Wisdom allowing me to pin the difference, I was able to identify several critical aspects.

And the rushing figure of not-Delia, ready to deliver another punch, was a perfect driver to learn. "You can't even cast your spell properly," she smirked violently as her fist connected with my ward once more.

The loss of instinctual learning was scary, I decided as I repeated the same wind trick after I blocked the skill once more.

[-196 Mana]

This time, I was happy to note that the distance between us almost increased to five steps despite her preparation and slightly lesser mana spending. “How about this,” I said with a smirk. “Much better, right? Maybe you’re not as scary as you thought you are.”

“Really?” she growled as she moved forward, attacking once more. We fell into a weird pattern, sometimes letting her attacks succeed, giving her satisfaction of making me hurt, sometimes deflecting her attacks.

[-2849 Mana]

[-619 HP]

However, after five minutes and a great amount of mana expenditure later, I was able to cast the wind spell with a satisfying proficiency. It was still below — if barely — the expertise I displayed when I had first completed the basic level of the skill, and that was with the great difference in the stats between the two periods.

Yet, the speed of learning I was able to achieve during the process was impressive, even if it came with wasting enough mana to kill her more than twice.

“That’s enough sparring,” I said after a while, doing my best to look exhausted in the process. With my regeneration, I had already recovered most of the mana I had expended, but we were reaching a point that, even with her current lack of magical ability to accurately assess my spells, it was getting suspicious.

I let the shield fall, only to receive a surprise kick that sent me flying.

[-85 HP]

The kick was a surprise not because I lacked the ability to react. With my reflexes, her skills weren’t advanced enough to prevent me from reading her moves even if she pushed herself to the limit. And, with her perceived success of beating me earlier, she wasn’t even pushing her skills to the limit in the first place.

Yet, I let that connect, because it was an excellent excuse to push back. “I see, you’re willing to

play it like that despite the consequences.”

“What consequences?” she said, a vindictive laugh exploding against the walls. “There’s nothing you can do I can’t handle.”

Unfortunately for her, my smirk was no less vicious. “As you wish,” I said. “You can tell Delia that you have ruined the cooperation that she had worked so hard to earn.”

The speed with her satisfaction melted away, replaced by a shocked expression, was a work of art. “W-what do you mean?” she gasped.

“I mean that our cooperation is over, completely. Not only I won’t help your princess in that mission, but also I’m going to stop working on the project. Have fun explaining that to Delia.”

“W-wait,” she gasped, her eyes wide. “You can’t do that!”

“And you’re going to ensure that, how?” I asked, enjoying the panic that was exploding on her face. And even better, with all of her skills geared for combat, she had no hope of reading that, or understanding the nature of my bluff.

“But...” she said, trying to find an argument, one that failed as I turned my back and started walking away. “Please,” she gasped. “I can apologize.”

I had to hide my smirk as she reached for the clasps of the leather armor she was wearing, panicked enough to reach the same solution that had secured my cooperation earlier, about to deliver the same thing that enraged her in the first place.

And, it would be a lie to say that I was not tempted to get that immediately, teaching her about the best way to take revenge. Unfortunately, that conflicted with my desire to resolve the mystery that surrounded them — especially since I didn’t dare to poke around in their residence, afraid of more surprises.

Luckily, there was a way to resolve both problems simultaneously. “Not like this,” I said with a shrug and continued walking, enjoying her surprise. “I’m going to take the rest of the day off, and tomorrow morning, I’m going to visit Delia for another breakfast. Either you be there as well, and both of you apologize, properly, or I stop working with the princess.”

I didn’t ask that just because I wanted a fun threesome where both girls worked hard to earn my forgiveness. It was just a nice bonus. I wanted someone else other than not-Delia to visit, so that I could work on deciphering their tricks with the assistance of a second person.

I smirked at her sudden silence, giving her a second to realize just how badly she had fucked up, before adding one last sentence. "And, feel free to go and complain to the headmistress if you want. I'm sure she'll be very helpful."

With that, I left her behind, confident that she would accept my request, my mind already on the best ways to handle the surprising freedom I had found myself enjoying.

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Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

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HP: 4891 / 6528 Mana: 4910 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [84/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]



# Chapter One Hundred Eighty-Nine

I couldn't help but smile as I walked away.

Getting kicked around in a locked room was certainly not a fun process. However, as much as I didn't enjoy that part of the process, I appreciated the excuse to leave early.

Especially since I wasn't the one responsible for explaining.

No, explaining to the princess how badly she had fucked up was not-Delia's task.

And, as an added benefit, by taking time off from their project, I found myself a beautiful challenge. One that I hadn't been dealing with for a while.

Finding a way to kill my free time.

I had to admit, going back to my room to laze around was tempting, especially since I had been dealing with a lot of things the last few days, and earned a bit of relaxation.

Yet, that was nothing more than a fleeting fancy. With everything going on, I didn't have the luxury of resting, nor did I have the luxury of neglecting an opportunity to finally power up.

Soon, I was climbing down the familiar stairs of the Hall of Craft, easily staying out of their sight, ready to have a discussion with Oeyne. There were a few reasons for that decision. Progressing Oeyne's companion process would give me a decent chunk of experience, while she also had several interesting tricks to make me relax.

And, last but not least, she had a really comfortable bed, which could be used for a quick rest after I had completed my more important objectives.

Since I didn't waste my travel time, I cast a few healing spells to remove the marks not-Delia had left on my face while also refreshing my life force.

[-392 Mana]

[+1637 HP]

Yet, when I arrived at her workshop, I realized that I had forgotten to add a small detail. Oeyne was still sleeping — not without the assistance of a few too many drinks if the sharp smell of alcohol that filled her workshop was any indicator.

Well, no surprises there considering how we first met, I thought even as I looked at the caramel-skinned beauty in her bed, her skimpy nightie climbing high enough to give a proper glimpse of her body.

Someone had a fun night, I thought in amusement. Whenever I visited her, I faced one of the two equally likely possibilities, that she was working as a workaholic, or collapsed after a night of overindulgence as an alcoholic.

The only question was whether gambling was a part of her little game this time or not.

Since she was sleeping, I decided to take that as a sign and joined her — after removing my clothes and casting two spells, one to remove the thick smell of alcohol, the other to remove her hungover.

A little service to make sure she woke up happily wouldn't be remiss, I thought even as I slipped next to her, letting my hands slip under her nightie, enjoying the warmth of her skin even as I spooned her.

If her sleeping shuffle was any indicator, I wasn't the only one that found that comforting.

I set the sleep take me, not that I needed the rest, the combination of my Stats and my Biomancy tricks enough to keep me upright for much longer, but a touch of decadence wouldn't be remiss...

It was her shuffling that woke me up. “W-what?” she mumbled, starting with a flare of panic, but it was short-lived, replaced by a more pleasant tone for the second half of her whisper. I kept my eyes closed, not revealing the fact that I had already woken up, wanting to extend my decadence, hoping that she would return to my arms without prompting.

Her warmth was simply too comfortable.

Oeyne clearly had other ideas, though, carefully extracting herself from my hug, and disappearing into her bathroom. Pity, I thought as I shuffled in her bed, trying to find a more comfortable position to continue my nap, ignoring my earlier decision to focus on powering up.

As much as I wanted to tease her while powering up, the warm whispers of my sleep were too comfortable to be denied.

Yet, before I could return back to my sleep, Oeyne returned to her bedroom, her looks refreshed. She was still wearing a nightie, but this time a white and lacy one, the kind that was

far too fancy to be used to sleep ordinarily.

She climbed to the bed once more. I expected her to slide back into my arms, grabbing the opportunity to nap a bit more after the exhausting and alcohol-filled evening that she had — and more than likely, shocking amounts of gambling.

She didn't follow my guess, instead choosing to linger on the other side of the bed, her gaze dancing on my naked body, her eyes clear of any persistent annoyance of hangover, or a sleepless night.

Maybe I had underestimated the impact of my healing spell on clearing hangover, especially combined with the impact of her high Endurance, I decided as I looked at her eyes, shining with a surprising clarity considering she was as far away as possible from being a morning person.

Or maybe, she was simply too enthusiastic about keeping me happy after our last time had resulted in her gaining a nifty little enchantment.

Curious about what she would do, I didn't give any indication that I wasn't sleeping, even when she put her hands on my thigh and pushed me slightly, making me lay on my back. And with me in that position, she had no problems reaching her ultimate target considering my nudity.

Ironically, holding my chuckles back was harder than hiding any other emotion, because even as she leaned forward, I could see a certain awkwardness on her beautiful face.

It wasn't too surprising for her to feel self-conscious. It wasn't our first time, of course, but it was the first time she was taking action without any kind of prompting from my end, be it an extended erotic massage, or something much more direct...

Like chaining her hands and testing the limits of her endurance.

That novelty value was the reason for her awkwardness, though it wasn't alone on her face as her hands moved over my shaft, gently dancing around in an effort to bring it to life. Excitement and desire joined her expression soon, turning her awkwardness into an erotic masterpiece.

Admittedly, her lacy nightie that was barely capable of hiding her caramel curves — especially with her current angle — played a very important role in the erotic tale her body was exemplifying.

I continued to relax in the bed as her fingers wrapped around my shaft, moving up and down

slowly with a fluidness that sent pleasurable shivers across my body as my shaft started growing, soon thick enough to strain her fingers as she tried to keep them closed.

Her fingers climbed even higher, grazing the crown, but this time, my attention was on the way she was leaning forward, her beautiful lips already parted.

She gazed at me to see whether I was showing any signs of waking up. And since she was unable to see through me, she pulled back.

Yet, that move was nothing compared to her follow-up, a surprising move that tested my desire to play along with her little surprise. She stood up, only to open a nearby drawer, and pulled two pairs of handcuffs.

I suppressed several questions that tried to force themselves into existence while she quickly used them to lock me against her bedpost — though I wondered whether it was my growing trust in her, or my utter confidence in my own abilities to free myself from them if needed that allowed me to react with such calm.

Regardless of the reason, I acted like I was asleep while she took her earlier position, her hands wrapped around the base of my shaft. But this time, there was a big improvement.

The crown was trapped between her thick lips, adding another dimension to my pleasure. I watched as she started moving up and down. Choppily at first, especially without my hands guiding her with the aggressive manner she came to expect.

That state of confusion didn't last long. Soon, she adapted an impressive rhythm, alternating between fast and slow, driving me deeper into the pleasure, as if forcing me to admit that I wasn't sleeping.

I chose to enjoy it passively because watching her as she slowly developed a technique of her own was a unique experience. It would have been a pity to interrupt that.

It wasn't as simple as simply rejecting that, of course, as while the tone and position might be different, we had shared some very memorable events together, and, clearly, I wasn't the only one learning about the body of his partner. She had discovered several interesting tricks in the process, and started applying them with devastating consequences.

Curious just how many tricks she had managed to discover, I let her have free access to my body for the next several minutes, watching as she teased my shaft from every possible angle, her lips even occasionally dipping down to my balls, each second there renewing the flood of

pleasure.

Soon, I was not too far away from a climax. And while letting that come as a surprise was an option, it wasn't the most fun option.

Instead, I spoke. "What an excellent way to wake up?" I whispered softly even as I gave a tug to the handcuffs, acting as if I had just noticed their presence.

"I decided to be a good hostess," she answered as she raised her body, her throaty tone sending shivers across my body. Then, she put her finger on the cleavage of her nightie. She didn't pull it down hard, but her nightie wasn't the most robust clothing in the first place, and her finger deepened the cleavage significantly. "Is my services satisfactory?"

"I would be remiss to comment on it before you show your full abilities," I commented.

Her enthusiastic smile was very promising...

-----

[Level: 32 Experience: 499160 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

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Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

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HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 8000 / 8000 ]

SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [84/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Ninety

“So, how does it feel to be on the other side of the bindings for once?” she whispered as she leaned forward again, giving me another glimpse of her deep cleavage while she examined the chains that were keeping me in place.

“Can’t complain,” I answered as I looked at her, unable to hide the growing smile as I noted the careful way she listened to my tone, her smile getting wider. Without my phenomenal observation, I might have assumed that it was just the satisfaction of keeping her partner happy, but there was a certain urgency in her gaze.

She was too transparent for me to miss her aim. She wanted to ask for a favor.

I deliberately didn’t ask her about that. Not that I wasn’t curious about the reason. I certainly was, especially since with our relationship, she should be able to ask a lot of reasonable things of me. More importantly, it was clearly not a major issue, which would have driven her to a panicked state rather than her current impatient yet playful combination.

However, just because I wanted to learn didn’t mean I was in a hurry to learn about that, especially not if asking directly would ruin the mood she was doing her best to establish.

She leaned forward further under my appreciative gaze, bringing her lips against the crown of my shaft, a little gasp escaping her beautiful mouth as her tongue jumped out, licking along the length of it. “Mmm, delicious,” she moaned in appreciation, though her satisfaction a touch exaggerated.

It was clearly an attempt to enhance my satisfaction before she finally asked for the favor she needed.

Not that it was a great chore for me to stand on the other side of it, watching as Oeyne’s lips slowly travel down, the head of my shaft disappearing from the view as the warmth of her mouth hit.

I just leaned back, giving her the space she needed to work at the pace she desired. She did look a touch uncomfortable with the sudden freedom she found herself, expecting me to take back control at any moment, but that didn’t prevent her from going deeper.

The desire dancing behind her beautiful eyes didn’t allow for anything else.

It might be the favor that was making her push more aggressively than she might have

otherwise acted, but ultimately, it wasn't like she was committing a great chore that was anathema to her personality, not when our last time was too close for the memories of pleasure to fade away from her mind.

I obediently stayed chained while she convinced me to work on my shaft splendidly, her soft fingers — which was a miracle thanks to the System considering her job as a blacksmith — and her even softer breasts alternated around my shaft, continuously maintaining a tense warmth.

A tenseness that was slowly getting more splendid as she got more comfortable with the unfamiliar position, slowly building up experience under the guidance of my grunts. Though, if there was one drawback to my current position, it didn't allow me to grab her hair and pull it down, allowing me to leverage the tightness of her throat even more.

Luckily, she lacked the personality to continue teasing slowly and keep me on the edge, too direct to enjoy that aspect. I could only imagine how Cornelia would have reacted if I allowed her such power over me even for a fantasy.

Maybe I should visit her and try that...

As Oeyne pushed her head down, her throat clamping around my shaft, the pleasure that radiated worked wonders to bring my attention back to the present.

It was not exactly comfortable for her as well, indicated by her gags and gasps, but it was hardly the most uncomfortable position she had ever faced in our little games. She stayed focused on her task of bringing me to completion.

If I was a merciful man, I would have let it explode after starting to feel the stirrings of a climax, filling her throat with my seed. Yet, while I had many positive qualities, mercy was hardly one of those.

Keeping myself from climaxing was not difficult — though not trivial as well, not with the great pleasure her throat was providing for me.

It didn't take long for her gaze to rise — without even pulling back, making the view even more amazing — to catch mine. "It's your self-appointed task, sweetie," I said. "You need to work hard and finish it."

Even without angling for a favor, she wouldn't have rejected such an order, but the presence of that yet-to-be-named favor forced her to go even deeper. Framing it as a challenge forced her to challenge her limits even more. She grabbed my hips and pushed herself down, enveloping



my shaft even more spectacularly.

She moved even deeper, her throat around my girth much stronger than the chains around my wrists. She lingered there without taking a breath, going in and out, but never pulling back enough to allow herself to take a breath in the process.

As she continued bobbing over my shaft, I considered freeing my hands, to accompany her for more interesting tasks.

Before I could make that decision, however, Oeyne pulled back. "Surrendering already?" I said with mock disappointment. "Maybe I shouldn't have trusted you to handle it.."

"In your dreams," Oeyne growled as she looked at me, her determination to 'win' intensified even further with my constant mocking. Yet, even as she looked down, I could see her determination fading, her confidence damaged by her earlier lack of success.

I chuckled, which fueled her anger immediately. "I'll show you," she added as she shifted forward. But this time, she didn't lean forward but shifted her hips, sheathing my shaft with her wet core.

Another moan exploded off her lips as she pushed herself down, skewering herself with my shaft, another moan rising in response.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 27%]

I smiled at the notification. It was progress that was never unwelcome.

Oeyne's hips started to rock, unaware that she was working for another very useful perk for herself and strengthening me at the same time. Her hands landed on my shoulders for leverage, using her freedom to dance back and forth along with my lap as her warmth tightened around my girth.

My hands were tied, but that didn't mean I couldn't pull tricks in other ways. I cast a Biomancy spell, one that would block her from climaxing, making sure that she wouldn't be enjoying herself too much without a consequence even as I deliberately left her attempts fruitless.

Oeyne rocked hard on my lap, unaware of the trap she had already stepped in, too distracted by the pleasure to notice my subtle spell. Soon, her face started to darken, the pleasure making her skin flush to deepen her caramel tone.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 32%]

The rapid progress was rather impressive, showing the depths of her pleasure.

She didn't say anything as she continued her self-appointed mission, but that didn't mean she didn't make any noise. Her moans exploded against the walls.

Yet, it was the desperate quality in those moans that attracted me. It started slow, coming from subconsciousness, but for all her direct attitude and self-destructive ways, she wasn't stupid. It didn't take long for her to realize the unnaturalness of her explosion.

"What did you do?" she gasped in shock.

"Hey, don't go blaming me just because you're not as good as you could be," I murmured.

"You used a spell, didn't you?" she blamed, though her hips didn't stop even for a second even as she blamed me for that.

"Yes, but only on you," I answered smugly. "After all, it would be unfair to finish before your guest, wouldn't it be? Of course, if you beg for it, I might pity you and let it slide. What do you say?"

"Never," she growled, her passion renewed by the challenge as her hips moved even faster. I could have tried to push for more, but that meant that they could have a unique approach to the other aspects of the game.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 36%]

"Good," I said mockingly as her hips started moving once more, my teasing tone making her move even faster. "It's good that you have the discipline to finish what you have started. Otherwise, we would stay here all day, not having any opportunity to talk about the favor you're clearly about to ask."

"W-what favor," she gasped in shock, her expression beautifully twisted in panic while her hips stilled. "I didn't say anything about a favor."

"Oh, really," I said as I smirked. "So, are you saying that you don't have a favor to ask? If so, it's clearly my mistake."

She looked at me, her expression of panic would have been pitiful if she was a weak woman. But, considering she was a mid-twenty level blacksmith, strong in battle and in crafting at the

same time, it only made the moment more erotic.

It was fun to watch such a self-possessed beauty panic over such a small thing, especially since if she stopped even for a moment to think, she would realize there was nothing bad about asking me a favor after everything. Yet, caught in a moment, she froze helplessly.

“No wonder you always lose while gambling,” I said with a chuckle, which made her expression flare in a momentary frustration. “Don’t worry, I’ll help you. Tell me what I do I need to do?”

“I... I lost while gambling,” she said, followed by a number that made my eyes widen.

“Damn girl,” I said even as I waved my hand, breaking the chains that were holding me. “That’s an impressive number. Who the hell had that much money.” Then, combined with her hesitation, it clicked with me. “Don’t tell me that you lost it to someone from the Princess’ party, after my warning.”

Her expression of desolation was beautiful.

“Don’t worry, I’ll help,” I said, as I had no intention of abandoning Oeyne to their clutches. Then, I grabbed her waist and throw her on the other end of the bed, her back pressing against its soft fabric, her legs spread apart.

Then, I waved my hands, and her covers turned into chains, wrapping around her arms and legs. “But first, a little lesson about gambling irresponsibly...”

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[Level: 32 Experience: 499160 / 528000

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Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

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## SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [84/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

## PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Ninety-One

I couldn't help but smile in anticipation as I looked down at the caramel beauty in front of me, her legs parting readily as she pushed forward, more than happy with the punishment she was about to receive.

Not that I blamed her. Considering some of our earlier encounters in our relationship, it could be hardly considered a punishment, but I neither had the time nor the inclination to punish her for real, especially with the Princess' team waiting on the edge, waiting to latch on to the opportunity to actually convert her to their side.

I was confident in preventing that, of course, but that was under the condition that I was around to intervene — a fact that I could no longer take as a given considering the recent chain of events. I couldn't guarantee that I would be around, and it was for the better not to leave Oeyne's vulnerable to their political predations.

Of course, there was another, more primal, reason for my decision. It was hard to deny having such a beautiful and accomplished woman in front of me, parting her legs obediently to receive her 'punishment'.

I couldn't help but lean forward further and bite her shoulder, leaving a soft mark — one that I made permanent with a little application of a healing spell by modifying a scar-removal spell — to underline my ownership.

"You're mine," I growled as I grabbed her hips and impaled her, earning a loud moan. There was not a little bit of gentleness in my push, but she clearly didn't mind that the slightest of her moan was any indicator.

Or the notification I just received, the numbers working excellently to show the depth of her pleasure.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 41%]

Meanwhile, my hands tightened around her waist, enjoying the feeling of her supple skin while her back arched under the aggressive invasion, her body melding against my transmission.

Yet, just because I decided not to punish her didn't mean that I wouldn't use the opportunity to drive my message deeper. "So, tell me, what was your biggest mistake," I asked.

"Losing the game —" she started, only to be interrupted by a slap to her beautiful breast,

making it jiggle erotically, which was further enhanced by her beautiful moan.

“No, it wasn’t that. Try again.”

The pleasure invaded her body after my spank, but I was happy to see that, behind that, a thoughtful expression appeared as she considered my question again. “Betting too much —“ she started, only to receive another spank, this time twisting her nipple in the process.

After the twist, it took a while for her moans to subside, her body tensing as the pleasure reached a level that would have triggered an explosion if it wasn’t for the spell that kept her on the edge.

I kept that spell ongoing, as it was the only thing that underlined the sense of punishment.

Even though it came with a reward at the end.

“Try again, but this time, try to think based on my warnings.”

She paused for a long while, trying to think, which didn’t get any easier with the steady rhythm of my hips invading her core repeatedly. “P-playing with them,” she managed to stammer after a while, her hesitant tone interrupted by moans, making it even harder for her to answer.

I leaned forward, softly kissing the bite mark that I left earlier on her shoulder, then moving to kiss her neck. “Good work,” I whispered into her ear. I rose back, once again focusing on the steady movement of my hips. “Don’t forget that they are not our allies, and they have nebulous objectives. The less involved you get with them, the better.”

“But... But what if they ask me for more.”

“Tell that the headmistress has an urgent request from you, and start working on the most complicated, the most nebulous research project you have, and say that you’re under orders not to stop for anything except helping me forge the item they need once my research is complete.”

“But...” she gasped in shock. “Faking an order from the headmistress is —“ she started, only to be interrupted by another slap to her beautiful breast, this time hard enough to leave a mark.

“Who do you think you’re talking with. If I say the headmistress would send an order, it means that she’ll send an order. No question about that.”

As I talked, I let my hands wander, climbing up until they arrived at her spectacular globes. But

this time, rather than visiting for a flash, they stayed on their glorious peaks, digging down harshly.

She moaned as I kneaded her tits aggressively, her moans rising even more as her tunnels tightened, extracting a moan from me as well.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 47%]

“Then, the next question. Tell me everything that happened during the game, particularly about the Princess’ handmaid. First, what was her name?”

“D-Delia,” Oeyne said. Unfortunately, with their spectacular ability to change their looks, it was impossible for me to be sure whether what Oeyne said was accurate or she had been in disguise. Yet, it needed to be asked before going to the next stage.

“Good, now, tell me everything you can remember about what Delia said and did,” I added. Her expression of shock was understandable. While she had an impressive memory thanks to her stats and could remember her actions in great detail even if she hadn’t paid much attention to them during the game, her current position wasn’t exactly conducive for accurate recall.

Luckily, my aim was not to listen to her observations but to add another layer of punishment to our game. Unfortunately, with their ability to modify their skills, anything Oeyne managed to notice would have been under subject.

Yet, it worked wonderfully to increase her strain even more, with the added benefit of exerting my power over her even more, triggering her submissive nature.

I focused on her body as she talked, squeezing and kneading her beautiful breasts while my hips worked steadily into her core.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 50% - Second Stage Completed +10000 Exp]

[New Perk: Mana Regeneration]

[Mana regeneration perk activated. Duration, 8 hours]

It was always nice to receive another instance for mana regeneration, as if my recent experiences taught me anything, there was no such thing as too much mana.

Meanwhile, Oeyne was gasping in shock for a different reason. “A-another achievement,” she gasped in shock.

“Sweetie, when you’re with me, a measly achievement is the least of your rewards,” I answered as I leaned forward, interrupting her next words by pressing my lips against her busty chest, making her moan beautifully in the process.

With her arousal unable to come to full fruition thanks to my spell, her moans were getting more and more delirious. I smirked, but not just due to her amazing moans.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 55%]

It was amazing to see her passing another milestone without a skip, though I had a feeling that our earlier discussion played a significant role in increasing her trust in me, which, in turn, allowed her companion's progress to improve even further.

Amazing achievement.

I grabbed her tight yet bountiful ass, my fingers encasing her bubble butt in my merciless grip. She let out a beautiful gasp while I explored every single inch of her beautiful breasts with my tongue, each brush making her moan even harder.

“So, Oeyne,” I whispered when I pulled back for a breather, interrupting her chain moans. “Tell me. Are you enjoying this?”

Her answer was never in doubt. “Yes!” she cried loudly, her voice echoing against the walls, strong enough to deafen a weaker man. And, more importantly, it wasn’t the only action she displayed that had the potential to injure a weaker man. Her legs wrapped around my waist, carelessly applying her strength as she pulled me deeper, one that showed her growing arousal.

Not that I needed any other sign, not with the way arousal was dancing behind her lovely brown eyes...

“Do you think you earned a climax,” I asked, unable to reject the temptation of growing arousal?

“Y-yes,” she gasped in answer, though her usual confidence replaced by a hesitant tremble, successfully giving an aura of begging — one that was wrapped in a nice erotic package.

“How daring,” I growled, giving a menacing tone, one that made her gasp in fear, a fear that had absolutely no impact on her arousal. I replaced that with a smirk soon. “Luckily for you, you deserve it,” I told her even as I leaned forward to twist her nipple, while simultaneously canceling the spell that was keeping her on the edge.



The resulting explosion of moans and fluids was spectacular, especially with the speed she tightened around me, finally breaking my ability to reject the temptation of arousal, filling her...

Of course, that was not the end, not when I had been receiving such incredible benefits from our little dance. I let her catch her breath before we started again. For me, it was amazing from both perspectives, watching her moans intensify.

Though, as much as I loved her toned caramel legs wrapped around me, it wasn't the reason I was pushing her without break despite having so many things to deal with — including a dragon to interrogate.

The answer popped into my sight after almost three hours of intense lovemaking...

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 75% - Second Stage Completed +15000 Exp]

[New Perk: Skill Share]

It was good timing, because, under the endless rush of pleasure, Oeyne was on the edge of collapse already, and the fresh pleasure broke her resistance. "A...another perk," she gasped. "This time, even stronger."

"I know, sweetie. I want you to be stronger in case you face a threat," I added before leaning forward and stealing a kiss. "Now, why don't you take a nap while I go and work. And don't forget to stay away from the princess' team, and don't agree to anything before talking to me."

"A-as you wish," she murmured. "A nap wouldn't be..." she added, unable to finish her sentence before the exhaustion caught up with her.

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[Level: 32 Experience: 524160 / 528000]

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 8000 / 8000 ]

## SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [84/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

## PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Ninety-Two

After I left the workshop, it didn't take long for me to decide on my next destination.

I wanted to go visit Janelor, and not to have some fun with my petite dragon. Or, more accurately, not entirely for fun.

I wanted to question her more about the other planes and traveling in between. Not that I didn't trust the headmistress' explanation, at least in the general strokes as she had no reason to lie to me about those, but that still left the question of Janelor had a more recent experience in those dangers as she somehow found herself in here.

On the contrary, I didn't even know whether the headmistress even traveled, or was around since the beginning of the system, making her explanation about interplanar traveling not entirely reliable.

And I prioritized exploring that for one important reason.

I could still feel Aviada's presence through her Companion node. Her presence was weak, blunted, a faint flicker compared to the bonfire of Helga and others, yet, without a doubt, she was still alive. One that wasn't supposed to be the case if traveling between planes was as impossible as the headmistress mentioned.

I wouldn't abandon her while there was still hope.

Janelor represented an alternative source of information for me to validate.

But one didn't simply visit a greedy dragon without an appropriate tribute.

So, I first stopped by the kitchen, taking a considerable amount of ingredients — using the authority granted by my new role — before finding an unoccupied corner and creating a couple wards to keep me concealed before I started cooking a veritable late breakfast spread, from light cheeses to cooked meats, and even an impressive number of desserts...

Naturally, every single bite laced with an incredible amount of mana, enough to change the fate of an actual battlefield if used appropriately, though, luckily, my mana recovery filled my reserves before I finished cooking.

[-4680 Mana]

Not all of the mana went directly to the food, of course. A considerable amount of it went to create a temporary barrier around the food, forcing the food to keep that much mana in its confines and block the System from absorbing it back directly.

Only after that, I went to her room, once again putting myself under the suffocating sensation of darkness wards, weakening my connection with the System. Once again reminding me that, for all the power it had provided, the System was not something completely reliable.

The door was locked with an intricate ward, one that had been cast recently. The excessively delicate nature of the ward showed that Janelor was the party responsible for its existence. It would have been a strong ward if it wasn't for the deterioration it experienced as the mana evaporated easily from its structure...

Without the deterioration, unlocking it without triggering an alarm would have been challenging, but at the moment, it was as effective as a castle gate connected to broken walls. A momentary effort was all that was needed to bypass them.

I entered the room and found my cute 'mistress' sleeping, her petite body sprawled over her huge bed, still in her human form. Her beautiful body was not naked, but considering the thinness of the nightwear she was wearing, she might as well be naked.

I said nothing as I walked toward her bed with the tray in hand, wondering whether sleeping that much was the habit of all dragons, or it was just something unique to her due to her laziness.

She woke up before I could cover half of the distance, though the way her cute nose twitched suggested that it was not my footsteps that pulled her out of her sleep but the smell of the amazing food I had prepared for her.

"Good morning, mistress," I said, intentionally lingering at the last word while letting the smile on my face twist beautifully. "Did you have a nice sleep?"

For a moment, she just looked at me, beautifully dazed. Then, her gaze bounced between me and the door, no doubt trying to understand how I entered despite the ward — suggesting that she was yet to understand the full impact of the System on her spells despite the time she spent here.

While she dealt with her mental question, I continued to close into her bed. Distracted, it took a while for her to remember what she had been wearing, her blush intensifying as she glanced down.

The best part, her pride prevented her from asking me to turn, or even cross her arms around her chest to hide. The only thing she did was to cross her legs, and even that, she did with the excuse of shuffling. “W-why are you here?” she asked, unable to prevent herself from stammering.

“I brought your breakfast in bed, of course,” I said, with a tone that might be considered respectable if it wasn’t for my widening smirk. I took a step back and turned slightly. “But I can always throw it away if you don’t want it.”

To her credit, she managed to resist the temptation of my delicious cooking.

For three whole steps.

“Stop,” she gasped. If someone else heard the desperation in her tone, they might have assumed that I had been torturing her, and she finally shattered under my merciless assault.

Such a gluttonous little dragon.

“As you wish, mistress,” I said as I turned back, an exaggerated smile of satisfaction on my lips, intentionally big to make her notice. Yet, under the fascination of the food, she let that slide, her gaze carefully following the food.

Her eyes even momentarily flickered, turning slithered before gaining back their usual emerald quality, glowing whole with no whites. It would have been an intimidating sight if it wasn’t for her sexy nightie — or the memories of the same eyes forced to shut under the endless invasion of pleasure.

“You can leave,” she said the moment I put the tray on the bed. Yet, when she reached, I pulled the tray back, and climbed on the bed as well. “What are you doing?” she asked.

“I’m going to feed you, of course. As a good servant, the satisfaction of my mistress is paramount. You can’t be asking me to be a bad servant, right? It would make me depressed.” I paused for a moment, my smirk widening. “Maybe even depressed enough to throw away the food I had gone all the trouble of making.”

The beautiful expression of frustration on her face was amazing as she considered my threat. “Alright,” she accepted defeat with a nod, but then she raised her hand in warning, the attitude coming across quite clearly as her hand turned into a claw. “No funny business.”

“I promise, no funny business,” I answered. After all, there was nothing funny about what I had

planned to do, especially compared to her so-called threat.

Her threat amused me significantly because of one very important reason. It was a great contrast to earlier, when she had been feeling very uncomfortable showing her transformation next to me. Yet now, she was very comfortable, proving our growing closeness...

Even when my mind was busy with the implications of her threat, my hands started working, slicing a small of cheese and brought to her lips, even using the opportunity to inject it with more mana.

[-93 Mana]

She tried to keep her face expressionless as she swallowed the piece, but that proved to be a bigger challenge than she assumed. Her tastebuds rebelled, followed by her throat, letting out a moan of appreciation.

Her fascinating emerald eyes turned to a tornado of petulant confusion, unhappy with her performance. Though, not unhappy enough to reject the next slice I had prepared for her, her pouty lips parting immediately the moment I raised the fork.

Another moan escaped her mouth.

She closed her eyes, enjoying every bite fully while doing her best to ignore my presence.

That would not do.

After several repeats, the fork I was carrying trembled accidentally — as it was very normal for someone with forty points on both Agility and Precision to experience — dropping a big blob of jam on her nightie, right at the nice valley between her breasts.

“Oh, mistress, I’m sorry,” I gasped, using my ability of speech and charisma to the limit to make it convincing just to mock her.

“Don’t worry, it’s —“ she started, reflexively responding to the anguish in my tone before her mind caught up with the absurdity of it. Her eyes opened, catching my wide smirk.

“Nonsense, mistress,” I answered, this time using my exaggerated servant tone once more. “It’s my fault I had ruined your nightie. Sorry, let me help you handle it,” I said as I grabbed her nightie, and ripped it off her body.

“Yes, you definitely saved it from ruin,” she answered, unable to help her sarcastic tone even as

she shuffled, unable to resist the temptation of covering her breasts. After all, while the earlier nightie hid nothing due to its transparency, it still gave her a clutch to convince herself that she wasn't naked.

A clutch that I got rid of with extreme prejudice.

Yet, as I prepared another slice for her, she opened her mouth obediently rather than making me leave...

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Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [84/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

## PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]



# Chapter One Hundred Ninety-Three

Watching the poor Janelor trying to look impervious and dignified even as she impatiently swallowed every little piece of food I brought to her was fun. She utterly failed in her task, not that it was too surprising.

It was very difficult to look impervious when one was completely naked, her petite yet curvy body even more appetizing than the buffet that was spread in front of me.

After getting rid of her nightie, I did nothing more than occasional caresses for the next few bites, just enough to arouse her memories of our last time, starting from a massage and ending up in an amazing, lengthy hug...

She said nothing, intent on enjoying the food, though a part of it was clearly about her lack of experience. Everything about her showed a lack of experience on the fun side of things. When it was time to act once more, I reached for a much more fun condiment.

Whipped cream.

I didn't miss the gazes she had sent toward its way, though I wasn't sure whether it was about her sweet tooth, or the incredible amount of mana I managed to trap in its gentle, fluffy structure. Yet, just as I put a generous touch on a sweet toast, to give her the first taste of it...

Another stroke of clumsiness hit me, and my hand trembled helplessly, letting the blob of fluffy cream fall. "How unluckily," I said as I smirked at her. "Luckily, I didn't ruin your bed, mistress," I added, as the white cream was firmly lodged between her glorious peaks.

What a fortunate coincidence.

"Not a problem," she answered quickly as she raised her hand, but I grabbed her wrist, preventing her from touching it.

"No, mistress. As a servant, I couldn't wait while you do the cleaning. It wouldn't be honorable." I raised my empty hand, and brought it to her chest. Unfortunately, my episode of clumsiness was yet to fade, and my attempts to clean it only spread it further. Soon, her breasts were completely covered with whipped cream.

Such an unfortunate disaster.

"I'm sorry, mistress, I'll fix my mistake immediately," I gasped even as I pushed her down,

enjoying the shocked gasp that left her mouth, one that turned into a moan as I leaned forward to lick her beautiful peaks.

Naturally, I didn't neglect to coat my tongue with mana.

[-258 Mana]

"W-what are you doing?" she stammered between moans.

"I'm just cleaning you, mistress. Completely innocent, I swear," I added, my smirk wide enough to make me a liar if she had any inclination of believing that in the first place.

"Nonsense —" she tried to say, only to be interrupted when I dig my finger into the whipped cream and slipped in between her lips, letting her suck the dessert off, which proved convincing enough to silence her. Meanwhile, I continued working on the great expanse of her chest slowly, sensuously.

Yet, under my hungry lips, even with the hunger burning in my gaze, it didn't take long for them for her breasts to turn completely clean. I pulled back, leaving her beautiful tits, glistening after my effort. "All clean, mistress," I whispered as I pulled back. "I'm sorry about my clumsiness."

"T-thanks," she murmured, though that didn't prevent her from looking dazed as she continued to lay, unable to process what had just happened, trying to process the invasion of pleasure. She pushed herself upright soon, which had a rather beautiful impact on her chest, making it jiggle erotically.

"Not a problem, mistress," I said, and without a warning, started leaning forward once more. "There's some left on your lips," I whispered, before capturing her lips in a searing kiss. Despite her initial shock and reluctance, her lips quick to respond against the kiss, her tongue joining the battle soon, wrapping tight enough to allow me to steal the taste.

"Delicious," I murmured in appreciation as I pulled back, not bothering to hide my great smirk as she panted obediently.

Her naked sight as she struggled to breathe, trying to throw off her daze was simply marvelous. Not enough to enter the list of the sexiest scenes I had ever seen, though, considering my experience midway, it was hard to gain a spot there without the assistance of at least another very sexy lady — the peak still occupied by our victory celebration following our battle against the undead.

Yet, while it might not play for the top of the list, the sight of a sexy dragoness out of breath, biting her lips idly like she was struggling to believe the feeling she had just experienced. “Open wide,” I whispered as I grabbed a mulberry, coating it with some liquid chocolate before bringing it back to her lips, giving her mouth something else to be occupied.

She slowly bit the mulberry absentmindedly, clearly unaware of the sexiness she was displaying as she slowly chewed it. I carefully fed her a few more bites before another accident happened, and her beautiful breasts were stained once more.

I couldn't help but smirk as I watched her move, laying back without the slightest prompting from my end, ready for my cleanup, her eyes closed in preparation. Yet, I didn't lean down immediately, instead grabbed more cream and chocolate, creating a beautiful edible bra for her.

“T-that's too much,” she gasped, but that was the extent of her complaints as I leaned forward, licking the edge of her beautiful new clothing item, one with an expected survival time even lower than her usual stuff. I had to admit, made by the full application of my Craft skill, the mixture tasted better than anything else I had the pleasure of eating.

Though the presentation certainly helped.

As I worked on her breasts, our closeness allowed me to see the way her beautiful skin gained a beautiful blush, the aura of cuteness not exactly damaged by the soft moans that she started to let out while her hands fisted around the bed covers. “Hmm, maybe I should use you as my plate for every breakfast,” I whispered. “You certainly taste nice.”

“I-impudent,” she gasped. “I'm a dragon, how dare you disrespect me like that!” she shouted. Her shout was loud, though if she was able to push herself up to a sitting position without her trembling arms surrendered, it might have been more intimidating. Under the circumstances, it only made her breasts ripple, increasing my enjoyment of her beautiful body.

“I'm not disrespecting,” I whispered. “On the contrary, I'm finding an excellent use for your petite body. Isn't it something you want, to prove your little stature is not an object of shame?”

“O-of course n—“ she started but her argument suffered a premature death when my fingers slipped inside her wetness, silencing her beautifully, her words leaving their place to endless moans as I coated my fingers with mana.

[-690 Mana]

She just moaned while I continued to devour her temporary bra, once again turning her cleavage into something more obscene as her nipples peeked through its white clouds. Though, just because I had finished the cream was no reason for me to stop. "Delicious," I murmured as I continued to lick and kiss her breasts, the occasional bite breaking the monotony as it left a lingering mark behind. "You're certainly the best plate imaginable," I whispered.

She was likely annoyed by my comment, but that didn't matter as she struggled to process the waves of pleasure that resulted from my invasion, each flicker pushing her closer to the edge of a climax.

Yet, I had no intention of making her climax. Not before she earned it. I raised my head, though I kept my fingers inside her wetness, the pleasure it provided critical to making her keep her gaze closed. Meanwhile, I prepared another breakfast surprise for her, one that fit the theme of our little game much more accurately.

She stayed unaware as I shuffled, taking my new place, only realizing something was different once I pulled my fingers back. "What are you—" she started, only to freeze as she opened her mouth, only to find me above her, my shaft already out, covered with chocolate and cream.

"I realized I was being unfair, treating you like a kitchen item. So, I decided to allow you to take revenge for this huge disrespect," I whispered as my lips formed a smirk, my hips pushing forward. "Open wide!"

She did so, though I didn't know whether it was to obey my order or to raise complaints. Either way, she opened her mouth, allowing my shaft to invade her beautiful throat.

And our breakfast took a small yet important step forward.

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Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 8000 / 8000 ]

## SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [84/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

## PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Ninety-Four

A groan escaped my mouth as the tight throat of my tiny dragoness enveloped my girth, the passionate bobbing of her head, well-earned after all the effort I spent preparing her amazingly delicious and mana-filled breakfast.

Then, I pulled back, giving her a breather. “D-delicious,” she murmured as she took a deep breath, but her tongue was quick to jump out, giving a lick to the side of my shaft, getting the remains of the chocolate from the side while triggering a shiver for me.

Simply spectacular.

I smiled as I look down, no less hungry, though unlike her, it was less about the deliciousness of the food, and more about how tasty she looked with her lips stained with chocolate and cream, the black and white creating an interesting contrast with her bright emerald hair and even brighter emerald eyes.

I didn’t know whether the heaven existed — the existence of a sexy angel withstanding — but even if it did, I doubted that it would be superior to the current moment I was enjoying.

While my thoughts slipped toward the cosmology of the universe, she assaulted my erection once more, but not before grabbing the bowl of chocolate and coating my length with the black liquid once more, and started licking again. As her tongue moved, the chocolate quickly dwindled.

I expected her to pull back for another refill, yet she didn’t do so, which told me that, at this point, it was just an excuse for her.

I just watched passively as Janelor’s tongue danced around my length whenever she took a breather, even after the food that covered my length long disappeared, her stained lips looking excellent whenever she took a more aggressive stance in bobbing. And the angle was making the scene even more beautiful, especially when her breasts pushed against my thighs, changing their beautiful shape for a fleeting moment.

A moan of satisfaction arrived, knocking on the door, and I let it go, giving her an audio clue that her treatment was working excellently, curious whether it would make her more passionate, or reawaken her arrogance. I wanted to believe that the first was the case...

Yet, she pulled back, an arrogant smirk on her face as she looked up, confirming that she chose

the second path.

Confirming that fucking the arrogance out of a dragoness was not as simple as I wanted to assume.

Luckily, I hardly had the intention of stopping my attempts. “You missed a spot, let me help,” I said as I grabbed her head.

“Wait—“ she tried to say, but that was all she was able to manage before I pushed my shaft into her beautiful throat. A sharp sound escaped her mouth, between a moan of pleasure and a cry of distress.

Despite its mixed nature, it was exquisite.

I moaned in satisfaction once again, this time even louder, but with her head locked by my hands, she didn't have the luxury of escaping unless she wanted to change forms, and that was only viable if she wanted to stop completely. Yet, her muffled gags and moans suggested that escaping was not a thought that occupied her mind.

Happy with her performance, I continued to push her deeper, doing using her to bring myself closer to a climax. And, with her puffed cheeks and excited eyes, she was clearly happy with my assistance with her task.

“You have a beautiful throat, your dragoness,” I murmured, unable to hold back a compliment as I pushed her even deeper, but this time, a momentary change. The next second, I pulled my hips back and pushed her on the bed. “But, you have finished your mission of cleaning it. Now, it's time for the real event.”

She said nothing as she found herself lying on her back, nor that she needed to. The speedy way her legs parted open told everything I needed to know about her mood. “So, do you want to see my impression of a rampaging dragon,” I said as I moved forward.

“Don't get too arrogant—“ she started, but that was all she was able to say before I grabbed her hands and pushed her up, tensing her body to push her beautiful breasts even higher before I pushed forward, invading her warmth once more. The beautiful moan she let out was beautiful, my hands pinning her down making it even easier to handle things.

“Really?” I said as my hips started to move, invading her phenomenal tightness. She left my comment unanswered, though her moans were an acceptable substitute. Not that those moans surprised me as I sank into her glistening arousal, impaling her aggressively, without a hint of

mercy.

Much faster than I would use against the others — with the notable exception of Oeyne — but my arrogant dragoness clearly needed another lesson about who was the true master despite the amusing fiction I still entertained.

Her hands grabbed my hair, pulling hard enough to trigger a flash of pain as her fingers tightened around the strands, but that only earned a slap onto her beautiful breasts.

“How dare you!” she managed to say between her moans.

“How dare I, what?” I said, acting oblivious as I continued to spank her beautiful breasts with the same merciless rhythm of my hips, the explosion of the multiple sources filling the room beautifully, steadily destroying any hope of her establishing power over me, certainly not through the bedroom — or any other places I might enjoy her beautiful body.

Not that she had any chance of doing so in the first place with the way she fell into pieces under the rush of pleasure without the slightest hope of resisting.

With that trait, it didn't surprise me when she soon started trembling under the merciless assault of the pleasure, signaling a beautiful climax.

But certainly not her last one.

“Where are we going?” she murmured a moment later as she recovered from her pleasure, only to realize I had already lifted her in a bridal hold, walking away.

“To get a better place than the bed to properly start our fun, of course,” I said.

“But...” she murmured dazedly as she looked in the direction that we were walking. “But there's nothing there but the dining table.”

“I know,” I answered even as pushed against the table, her legs barely able to touch the floor as her tits smashed against the cold wood, resulting in a beautiful gasp in the process. “But, considering we were eating on your bed, it's only fair that we use the dining table instead of a bed,” I explained.

“But we already did that—“ she started to comment, only for her voice to fade halfway as she felt my shaft pressing against her hole, but not the one I had been invading earlier.

“Not this one,” I murmured even as I started pushing into her tight hole, only stopping for a



moment to flare my mana.

[-928 Mana]

Most of the mana was a reward for the pain she was about to go through, but a small portion of it went to create a layer of lubricant, allowing me to slip easily into her beautiful hole.

And her bubble butt — with a shape and tightness that certainly deserved the term — gripped my shaft with an iron grip, showing just how necessary was the lubrication.

“You can’t do that! Not there!” she gasped as my shaft invaded her tightness mercilessly. “That’s wrong!”

“Not particularly wrong,” I said even as I pushed even deeper, leveraging her dragonic endurance to invade her mercilessly, even spanking her beautiful ass in the process, adding another layer to her little pain. “It’s even tighter than your beautiful lips, and as an added bonus, it doubles as an excellent way of teaching an arrogant dragoness her lesson.”

“You—“ she tried to say, only to be interrupted by a spank.

“Of course, we can always stop if are too weak to handle it,” I commented as I slowed down, which was all that was needed to silence her.

Pride was an emotion easy to abuse.

I continued to push inside her bit by bit as my shaft slowly disappeared inside her. She managed to keep her mouth shut until halfway, even with the occasional spank that landed on her ass, but that proved to be her limit, as her grunts mixed into the sound of my spanks.

Against someone else, I might have waited for her to get used to it, but against a dragon learning a lesson, mercy was clearly not the greatest idea. I pulled back, but before she could complete her relaxed sigh, I pushed forward, invading her core more aggressively, her pained cry echoing in the room.

“Slow down,” she gasped.

“Only if you admit you can’t handle it,” I said, glad that my healing abilities allowed me to walk the line between mildly painful and actually damaging very easily.

“Of — of course, I can handle,” she answered rapidly, her pride leaving no place for another answer.

“Good, then,” I said with a smirk, and pushed forward.

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[Level: 32 Experience: 524160 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 8000 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [84/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Ninety-Five

The roar of a dragon was famed to be legendary, impressive enough that, even with their extreme rarity in the System space, the stories about their roars persisted, becoming the material that would be discussed around the campsites.

Yet, as Janelor's voice exploded, it wasn't the stirrings of fear I felt, but a beautiful tingling that reinforced my arousal. Admittedly, that might be about the fact that her beautiful cry was not let out to convey her fury and willingness to slaughter like those legends of old, but a vessel for her explosion of pleasure, underlined with just the correct amount of pain and pleasure.

Not to mention shock, guaranteeing that I was the lucky winner of a special privilege.

As her delicious cries rang in the room, I pushed forward, my shaft disappearing inside her tight hole inch by inch, a process that she had managed to accept with a shocking smoothness, suggesting that her draconic endurance was certainly not only useful for battle.

Not too different from her cries.

I paused when my slow and steady push brought me halfway inside her, my girth slowly stretching her tightness even motionless. Her cries stopped after a second, then a weird silence filled the room. "W-what happened?" she asked in a tense voice, her curiousness battling with her determination to act aloof to maintain her pride — or at least, an illusion of a pride.

"I wanted to check if you were having any trouble, of course," I said. "If you want to say that you can't handle it, it's the opportunity to do so."

Her answer was predictable. "W-who can't handle it!" she stammered, the hitch in her tone showing her wounded pride. "I'm a dragon, and this is nothing!"

"Excellent," I said as I put my hands on her delicious bottom, enjoying her flawless skin. "Then, we can start for real."

I could sense her body tightening at the mention, realizing that my earlier words had goaded her intentionally, but it was too late. The same pride that forced her to give her challenging answer prevented her from changing her mind.

I could feel her body tightening as she prepared to resist to temptation to cry, trying to defend a scrap of her pride.

Yet, the same pride fell apart by failing to keep her silent as I pulled back quickly, the sensation it created enough to break all the determination she was able to accumulate under the circumstances.

Though, that cry was nothing compared to the one that followed as I used one hand to grab her beautiful emerald hair, pulling it back harshly to prepare her body for invasion, the other landing on her ass loudly the moment I pushed forward, earning a delicious cry in the process.

“Excellent work, mistress,” I whispered, my voice inevitably throaty as I pushed deep into her tightness, the pleasure radiating enough to challenge my supernatural ability to keep myself restricted as I started to impale her repeatedly.

Though, my reaction was nothing compared to my ‘mistress’, each push making her cries louder, even the limited sense of restraint she managed to maintain evaporating, leaving only a primal mixture of pain and pleasure for her.

In other words, a perfect time to interrogate her for some potentially-sensitive information.

“I was feeling curious about something, mistress?” I said, under the circumstances, not really bothering to put any emphasis on the word ‘mistress’ to make it ridiculous. The situation was more than enough to put that emphasis.

“R-right now?” she managed to stammer between her moans.

“Well, I thought you can easily handle it under the circumstances. But, if you’re feeling that you can’t handle it—“ I teased, only to be interrupted.

“Of cour—, of course I can handle it,” she said, trying to sound confident, though the loud moan in between went a long way to destroy the convincing nature of her words.

“Excellent,” I said. “I was curious about the lands outside the system, particularly how to travel there.”

“Of — of course, if you want to — commit suicide painfully,” she stammered, managing to sound mocking. Considering that she managed to achieve that effect while being rammed in her tight hole repeatedly, moans interrupting her every few words, it was impressive.

“Really, then how did you manage to arrive here if it was that dangerous?” I asked, not neglecting to spank her ass for her sudden arrogance. Just because I was amused by her reaction didn’t mean I wanted to avoid training her.

“Because I’m a dragon,” she said proudly, even trying to push her chest out proudly, though that hardly had the effect she was hoping for under the circumstances. I continued to ram into her, each push creating a more beautiful explosion of cries.

“And it’s relevant, how?” I asked.

“P-primordial aether,” she managed to answer. “We have the ability to resist — the corrosion of it much better than ordinary creatures,” she said.

“How interesting,” I said as I slapped her ass, not expecting to earn such an easy resolution to my suspicions that resulted from her success of arriving in the system space, and the Headmistress’ explanation about the near-impossibility of travel between different planes.

Maybe my secretive angel started to trust me more than I was expecting.

“Is this the reason you’re working for —“ I started, only to receive a growl to interrupt me. “Sorry, you’re allied with a goddess.”

“One of the reasons,” she answered, her tone more steadily as she managed to get used to my steady invasion. “Our ease to travel between planes is hardly the only advantage of our superior heritage. We rule every dimension,” she said, then made a dismissive gesture. “At least, ones that are not invaded by pathetic cheating abominations.”

I was tempted to say that she was currently being rammed repeatedly by one of those ‘pathetic cheaters’ but considering my own ambivalent feelings about the System, I let that insult slide.

Instead, I focused on the implications of the ability she revealed, about her ability to travel between planes. “So, can you bring someone else along when you travel between dimensions?”

“I’m not a pack horse,” she answered instantly, her voice sharp. Too sharp, with a sense of vulnerability underneath, which was even more reliable than a direct answer, admitting that she couldn’t.

And, considering the amount of sharpness it carried, I was willing to believe that her inability to help others travel between planes was a personal failing and not something that all dragons experienced. Her pride was too easy to read.

How interesting.

Still, even that gave me a lot of ideas about ultimately traveling to other planes and saving

Aviada from the predicament she found herself in. Especially since it was Janelor's personal failing to assist others to travel.

It meant she could be helped to overcome that particular failing.

But, that was a challenge for another day, when I had managed to learn more about the different planes — and more importantly, how could I use my abilities without the automatic instincts forced by the System.

And the current moment was a good method to test that as well. I used my mana to block the assistance of the Tantric skill, to see if I could easily copy that trick.

After blocking, I gathered a minuscule amount of mana, expecting a great challenge of manipulating that.

[-5 Mana]

Yet, surprisingly, I managed to coat my shaft with that easily, though that minuscule amount was beneath the notice of my dragon lover, who had been spoiled by much bigger rewards of mana. Interesting, I thought as I blocked Tantric completely as I repeated the earlier trick twice more.

[-94 Mana]

[-492 Mana]

Yet, despite repeating it with much higher amounts of mana, I managed to complete them with great ease, while earning moans of joy from Janelor, ones that were getting shockingly delirious, the combined effect of my mana and my ceaseless impaling pushing her dangerously close to the cliff of pleasure.

Under more ordinary circumstances, that display would have stolen my attention, making me watch with a smirk of satisfaction on my face, but under the circumstances, I had other things to focus on. Such as, the performance of my skill.

Maybe I was doing something wrong while blocking the skills while under the coverage of the headmistress' wards, I decided, and applied the same thing to my Arcana abilities, and cast a weak yet complicated light spell.

[-4 Mana]

Under that spell, what needed to appear was the five circles of colorful light dancing around each other, barely more than a cantrip, but instead, a flash of light exploded in an uncontrolled burst of light.

“What the hell?” I murmured, absentmindedly glad that Janelor was too far gone to care about the flash of light or my confusing whisper, as I certainly wouldn’t want to distract myself by explaining that to her.

Blocking certainly worked. I tried to block Tantric off the System again, and used my mana to coat my shaft.

[-793 Mana]

Yet, I once again succeeded without the slightest problem, annoyed by my own success. I released the block from the System and repeated the trick.

[-839 Mana]

Naturally, I succeeded again, but that success increased my frown even more, because that success was supposed to be considerably easier with my ability to access Tantric skill. Yet, it wasn’t.

It was just as easy, no more no less.

The repeated mana assistance triggered Janelor’s climax, her tightness gripping my girth, even more, triggering a climax of my own.

Yet, even the delicious explosion of pleasure was not enough to erase the frown off my face.

Something was wrong with my Tantric skill...

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[Level: 32 Experience: 524160 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45



Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 6790 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [84/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Ninety-Six

As I collapsed next to my cute, naked dragoness who had been trembling softly as she did her best to process her explosive climax, tethering on the edge of unconsciousness as she mewled in dazed satisfaction.

If she didn't show the signs of exhaustion already, showing she wanted to go back to her sleep, I would have pushed her against the wall for another session.

Instead, I pulled her against my chest, enjoying her warmth as her arms wrapped back automatically. It was supposed to be a calming moment, but it wasn't. Not when I was trying to process the latest realization, one that threw everything I had managed to discover about the System into question yet again.

It was the reason I let her go back to sleep rather than bothering them. I wanted to think about the implications of the Tantric, and why it was different than my other skills.

Of course, before making an immediate decision, I first needed to make sure my earlier discovery was not just a misunderstanding of the root, or a mistake of blocking. Which meant, I needed to do more experimentation. I quickly applied the same blocking trick to every single skill I owned, but the difference for every single skill, from Crafting to Melee, from Subterfuge to various magical skills, was sharp enough to be apparent, leaving no place for doubt.

Yet, for Tantric, between blocking and not blocking, there was absolutely no difference in performance.

I was shocked. Yet, I wondered whether it was even reasonable for me to feel shocked. From its ability to help others level up to actually giving me the ability to strip its uniqueness from the Divine Spark, there was nothing ordinary about the achievements triggered by the Tantric skill.

No wonder I never managed to find any proper information about it in the library.

Yet, that only created more questions. I remembered the dismissal the headmistress had when I first displayed that I had the ability to contain her Light Divine Spark, which, when analyzed together with the shock she displayed when she realized the structures made from Tantric mana were able to contain Divine Spark much more efficiently.

It meant that I wasn't the only one unaware of the true potential hidden in my skill.

It also meant that I needed to be careful about the capabilities I revealed to her — in particular,

the ability to purify the Divine Spark.

But that was a decision for another time. Instead, I repeated the earlier experiment, this time focusing on the changes that occurred between blocking and not blocking the skill, to see if I could catch something more.

At first, I was not sure whether it was going to be successful considering I was still under the wards that weakened the reach of the system, but after some time, I realized that wasn't the case.

The subtle shadow of the darkness wards created a little layer between the skills nodes in my soul space and the System, and that created subtle friction between that link, allowing me to catch the existence of a flow I had never noticed before. It was subtle flow, hard to describe, and impossible to decipher — at least under my current level of ability. I doubted that I could feel anything more than a flicker that would have been mistaken by my body's natural flow if it wasn't for the assistance of the headmistress' unique wards...

Yet, the same connection between the System and Tantric was dead. No flow, not even a flicker, completely empty, existing only in form.

And that only made it more complicated.

With a sigh, I slowly extracted myself from the arms of Janelor as she slowly fell back to sleep, our little exertion enough to make her collapse even after she had just woken up. I was tempted to nap with her, but that latest realization about the extraordinary nature of Tantric was enough to overwhelm that particular desire.

I couldn't say that I was glad about that realization, but that was not due to any direct reason related to its application of it. On the contrary, it actually allayed one of my biggest fears, that, somehow, I would find myself helpless with the System blocked.

Yet, it was inconvenient, because it put a lot of things in question, particularly about how the System functioned. I didn't have the slightest idea why Tantric could function without the assistance of the System, and it put into question whether Tantric actually came from the System...

My unique nature of getting experience certainly added to that particular question.

It was an annoying feeling, discovering the truths about such a fundamental part of my being, only to end up with more and more questions.

Unlike the previous times, I didn't even have the luxury of going to the library to explore some ancient books, or interrogate a naughty dragon or a prude angel for some scraps of information, because it was getting riskier to reveal even hints of my discoveries compared to the scraps of information I might extract, especially since their actions already confirmed their information.

And since it was pointless to ask the headmistress, it was also pointless to go digging around the library. It was just vain to assume that the headmistress was unaware of anything in the books, not when she had spent almost two centuries ruling the place, her unique method of concealment making reading the best way of killing time in isolation.

Technically, there might be a book or two she missed, but it was not worth my limited time digging around, hoping to find something that she hadn't comprehended properly.

With a sigh, I sneaked out of the school, aware that, technically, I still had one important destination where I might find the answers I was seeking.

I closed my eyes, focused on a mental direction before creating an air elemental, and started flying.

[-1320 Mana]

Unfortunately, my destination was not where I knew I could find the information I was searching, for two reasons. First, technically, I didn't know the exact geographical location of the information, but that didn't prevent me from searching.

The real reason I didn't dare go around poking, I was afraid of the attention it might create.

I did not have the power to deal with the Eternals.

At least, not yet.

Everything I had discovered about them, every little detail that had been revealed, suggested that they had a veritable army, one that treated warriors and mages over level thirty as disposable items — not to mention their ability to apparently mass-produce them easily, considering the training event I had stumbled on during the encounter in Mount Doom.

No, I didn't dare to go around poking such an organization.

At least, not before I could reach a power level I would feel comfortable. Instead, I set my

direction to the mental pull of two companion nodes in the same direction. I chose to use another air elemental rather than traveling directly, because there was no urgency for me to risk using teleportation.

Moreover, the travel allowed me to train my skills without the intervention of the System. Tantric might not be connected to the System, but it was certainly not the case for the rest of my skills.

Even picking my target skill wasn't too difficult. I picked Arcana, which was, ultimately, the most flexible magical ability one might have, from ward creating to utility charms. It might give a weak offensive, but considering my challenges, I didn't have the luxury of sacrificing the utility to maximize my damage potential.

As I flew toward my destination, I blocked my Arcana skill, trying to cast a simple arcana bolt, only for it to fizzle halfway, before it could even reach its target.

"Frustrating," I murmured. It was impossible for me to ignore just how critical the practice I was doing, not with the ease I was having blocking my own skills to drive the fragility of the power granted by the System, but that hardly made the sensation of failing something that was as simple as breathing any easier.

It was like trying to relearn walking.

But sometimes, you needed to relearn how to walk, if the alternative was to rely on a pair of enchanted legs that might simply run out of power and fold in the middle of an adventure.

I journeyed even as the sun slowly set, covering the area in darkness, underlining just how long my journey was even with the assistance of the air elemental, hunting the occasional strong monster I came across to replenish my reserves.

Yet, even as the sun set, there was no uninterrupted darkness, not with the explosions of the light that was happening on the horizon.

I couldn't help but smirk as I saw the signs of Titania's signature spell.

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[Level: 32 Experience: 524160 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 7592 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [84/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Ninety-Seven

I dispelled the air elemental before I decided to close in, wanting to get a better view of the event. After all, surprises on any battlefield had the potential to be deadly, especially against two mages with little to no support.

The first thing I did was to cast a low-level detection charm, allowing me to get a real-time map of the living — along with the unliving — with no effort and no risk.

[-28 Mana]

Of course, in the past, using such a trick was risky enough to trigger every single alarm of the liches that was found in any area of decent size, but my current skill level was different. I was able to replicate the same trick using much less mana, which made it much harder to be noticed.

And it allowed me to get a sense of the layout, which was simpler than I expected. It consisted of a group of defenders behind several layers of wards, and attackers trying to break them through repeated assaults.

Though, as a nice surprise, Titania and Marianne were the attacking sides, while undead was the side that was trying to put together a desperate defense against the inevitable assault.

It was a nice change of pace.

I started closing in as I carefully focused on their mana signatures. Titania's incredible assault didn't surprise me, as I had seen her fighting before. While she had certain flaws — her direct approach to battle one of them — she had the capabilities to justify her fearsome reputation.

The achievements she had gained during our fun only made her scarier.

Marianne, on the other hand, surprised me greatly. The last time I had seen her, she was just a healer — an amazing healer, maybe even the best in Silver Spires, but a healer nonetheless. Yet, the closer I got, the more accurate my feel for her magic got, and what I found surprised me.

The life energy was formed into several complicated shapes, rotating in a self-sustaining space as they danced around the wards of the undead, ready to destroy any undead that dared to get out of the wards for a counterattack.

They even managed to avoid the oppressive bursts of light magic as they rained on the wards — a courtesy of Titania — each formed into thin spears, weakening the integrity of the wards without wasting Titania's energy in the process.

I had to admit, I was impressed with Marianne's performance, who was using my trick in a spell that I didn't even think off — though, admittedly, with my perks, saving mana was hardly the greatest priority for me. Still, the smoothness of her spells and the efficiency of her approach were amazing.

Though, even with Titania, I was impressed by the way she was methodically disassembling the wards rather than overwhelming them in one burst, showing that she had learned quite a bit compared to our first fateful meeting, where she had been trapped by much simpler wards.

I wanted to watch them slowly work on the wards, but, unfortunately, we had bigger issues to deal with, so I started walking closer, intending on helping them.

Yet, before casting a spell to resolve the issue, I repeated the earlier spell, but this time, putting enough magic to cover a much wider area.

After the earlier debacle, after my target turned out to be a decoy in the first place, I decided to treat the undead with more care, in case I met with another tactical disadvantage.

That turned out to be a smart decision, as, the moment the spell spread past a mile, I felt a ping at the distance. I had found a ward that was hiding a couple of presences, which, interestingly, were not undead. Too distant to launch an ambush, but not too distant to observe the battle.

I decided that it was not appropriate.

[-294 Mana]

An earth spell, combined with a furious dash, and barely half a minute later, I was under their location. There, I stopped for a moment underground, focusing my senses upward to examine the little group, consisting of four people.

The first thing I noticed was that they were not necromancers. It was possible to conceal the taint of their destructive spell-casting from a distance, but it was impossible to do so when it was just a few feet of earth that were separating us. The second thing, even more helpful, to note was they didn't belong to Eternals — at least, that was what I assumed considering their wards were both too weak to be cast by someone over level thirty, and they were not based on the mysterious structure they had used during every encounter I had with them.



With that, I had no fear as I let my mana radiate up, and invade their structure — something that was made much easier by their ward protecting the top and sides much better than the bottom.

Simple mistakes, but simple mistakes were no less critical than complicated ones once someone started to abuse them. I let my mana bypass their wards and slip inside their bodies.

They were all between level twelve and fifteen, which put a frown on my face. Not because they were strong, at least not by the standards that I was getting used to, but their lack of strength.

If they had been stronger, I might have assumed that they were trying to assassinate Titania, but that didn't make sense. Even before she started receiving the benefits of working together, Titania was strong enough to demolish such a group in seconds even if they had the opportunity to ambush her.

The speed of retaliation her light magic allowed was simply ridiculous.

Yet, their presence was not accidental either. If that had been the case, they wouldn't have been hidden in wards good enough to avoid Titania's detection spells, or my first, weaker, detection spell. And their levels were enough to qualify them above disposable pawns for every single force with the great exception of the Eternals — and I had a feeling that Eternals were not exactly a group that bothered to deal with such weaklings.

Interesting, I thought even as I invaded their soul space with more of my mana, and with a flick, blocked all of their Stats and Skills at the same time, the great power difference allowed me to do so.

When I pulled up, I met with the panicking party, each just barely cognizant enough to realize what they had lost. And, my immediate presence revealed the truth of my presence. "Tell me, why are you here?" I asked.

They didn't turn completely idiotic even without the System, but the difference with and without their assistance was significant — a fact that I was intensely aware of, hence the reason I was objectively wasting a resource like Divine Spark that even the System required, and the gods battled for it outside the System space, just to avoid that exact fate.

"Tell me who do you work for, or perish!" I ordered, not even bothering to tap into the benefits of my Charisma to enhance the intimidation value. I was afraid that I would trigger a heart attack if I did so.

“W-we’re working for Crown Prince,” the four-voice answered at the same time, unable to resist the sudden pressure without the assistance of the System.

I found their cacophony of voices as unpleasing as the answer. “You three, silence,” I said before I turned at the one at the center, who looked slightly more coherent than the others. “What do you mean by Crown Prince, I thought the Empire had a Crown Princess.”

“N-not for long,” he stammered, his coherency not making him any more courageous than his friends, at least not in a manner that was useful.

“Explain,” I ordered.

“E-everybody knows the Princess escaped the capital with her tail between her legs. With that, it’s only a time before the Emperor takes her title and delivers it to the rightful Prince.”

“And you work for that Prince,” I asked, only to receive a nod. “And are you here under his orders?”

To his credit, he managed to maintain his hesitancy for a fleeting moment, until I blasted him with the weight of my Charisma, which worked wonders to increase his intimidation value to a dangerous level.

“Yes!” he gasped as he stumbled back, his face flat white. “He wants us to give a report about the members of Silver Spires since the Princess retreated there.”

“And?” I asked, but he kept his lips closed. Which, I had to admit, was an impressive display of loyalty. Too bad it was wasted in a game he was little more than a pawn. He didn’t even see the blade of air that cut off his head, and as he was busy with the realization that his life came to an end, I turned to the next one. “And?” I repeated.

This time, the answer arrived quick. “He wants us to take down any target of opportunity to weaken Silver Spires just in case they allied with the Princess,” he answered. “But only if we are sure that it couldn’t be traced back to us.”

I made a note to inform the headmistress about that particular detail to pull the school patrols tighter. I might have complicated feelings about Silver Spires, but it didn’t change the fact that it was the closest thing I had to a home.

With my pressure getting tighter, I had asked them a few more questions about their numbers and distributions, but they knew very little as they operated as a cell, and they were sent

directly from the capital with no local connection, just with a communication item to send emergency information.

So, I used their communicator to send an interrupted message about a sudden undead attack before killing them, a few simple modified healing spells was all I needed to create the evidence of a successful undead raid before destroying the bodies — as necromancers would never leave high-level bodies lying around.

Then, I turned my attention to the undead fortress, and with a flick of my hand, I used my Arcana abilities to unfold a few critical nodes, causing a cascading critical failure in the wards to destroy the bulk of the forces.

Until I could arrive at their location, Titania and Marianne finished destroying the remaining undead, looking at the ruined hill with a sense of satisfaction.

“So, girls,” I said cheerfully, amused by the incredible speed they turned to face me with their magic flaring, only for it to fade as they realized the identity of the intruder, though as their mana calmed, their anger only got more intense, an expression that did nothing to their spectacular beauty. “Who’s in the mood for a party?”

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[Level: 32 Experience: 524160 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 7923 / 8000 ]

SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [84/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Ninety-Eight

“You!” growled Marianne as she took a step forward, her beautiful face, usually calm and accepting, contorted into a dangerous hint of anger. I was surprised that it was her that spoke rather than Titania. Clearly, the battle mission affected her personality. Though, whether that effect was a positive one was open to argument. “How dare you scare us like that?”

“What did I do?” I said with an innocence that was too smug to convince anyone.

Marianne glanced at Titania, and made a gesture to her, earning a small nod and a smile from Titania, a reaction that was no less surprising than Marianne’s angry reaction. Clearly, my blonde goddess wasn’t the only one that was affected by the mission. I could see that Titania had mellowed significantly.

After all, for her, this mission was not an excuse to learn the merits of aggression, but finally have a calm mission that she didn’t have to work alone. Not to mention, the weakening of the mental effects of the Light Node helped her to connect better with her feelings, allowing her about the reality of the situation.

Though, I wasn’t able to think about their transformation much, because they raised their hands simultaneously, and a complicated web of magical attacks appeared around me, a rain of light, and rotating blades of life energy that danced inside in a chaotic pattern.

“Impressive,” I chuckled as I rolled forward, though I had to abort my assault when one of the rotating blades took a turn sharper than I expected, forcing me to change my path to avoid damage.

Of course, the damage itself would have been negligible, as Marianne barely put any mana behind the rotating blades — and even if she did, the life energy might be the weakest weapon against anyone that was not undead.

Though, it was still violent enough to cause some damage — and pain — as it was still not a healing spell.

In contrast, Titania’s rain of light was both easier and harder to avoid. Unlike Marianne’s assault, it didn’t have the ability to change direction midway, but in contrast, they were both fast and numerous — not to mention, unlike Marianne’s like magic, those spears that rained from the sky very much had the ability to hurt the living.

Otherwise, she would never develop her fearsome reputation.

Light elemental had a unique destructiveness, able to slip through any other element, including Arcana, easily. Luckily, that was not a problem for me. I conjured a blade of light, using the same element to deflect her attacks.

I dodged, danced, and weaved through their combined assault, deliberately throttling my Melee skill until their assault had turned an overwhelming rain that forced me to retreat.

Trying to dodge Marianne's complicated assault while deflecting Titania's unpredictable yet merciless rain was good training. And as an added benefit, I was pushing their formation to the limit, making them notice the weak points of their assault.

While my plan was to get stronger in a different manner, I decided to play along with their game. After all, it not only helped me to increase my Melee abilities without the system, but it also helped them to perfect their own formation, making them safer.

Unfortunately, not everyone had my boundless mana, and even with their limited expenditure, barely ten minutes later, their attack lost its intensity. Still, it was an impressive achievement for two mages, especially right after taking down an undead fortress.

"Are you girls bored with foreplay?" I asked, earning matching blushes on their face.

A part of that blush was borne of frustration, showing their unhappiness of failing to deliver even one hit despite their combined assault, but I was familiar with their expression enough to know that the majority came from the implications hidden in my latest words.

"S-shut up," Marianne said, but with her blush invading her face, her earlier domineering attitude was replaced by her usual shyness.

I just chuckled as I walked toward them, summoning an air elemental halfway. When I stood between them, I presented my arms to them. "Shall we go, ladies," I said with a smile that was familiar to them on my lips.

They said nothing, not that they needed to, with their intensifying blush and the hurry they displayed as they stepped onto the air elemental and hooked their arms around mine. And then, with beauty on each arm, I floated away.

We didn't fly much. Before they could say anything, I had already stopped in a small meadow I had discovered when I was floating forward, beautiful and free from monsters and other

annoyances.

“So, girls, who want the first relaxing massage after your exhausting battle,” I asked.

“Me,” both girls jumped simultaneously, their earlier alliance quick to shatter in the face of benefits. I was amused by the way they glared at each other, both unhappy with the initiative the other showed.

I chuckled as I let my hands move lower and cupped their asses at the same time, Marianne’s wide and soft, Titania’s small and tight. “It looks like a tie,” I chuckled as I let the elemental land next to the water, and slammed my foot on the floor.

[-729 Mana]

[+1 Craft]

And two massage tables rose, both made of crystal and covered with complicated patterns as I once again used the architectural style I had deduced from the headmistress’ stash, as their unique nature allowed them to hold mana much better.

After all, since I was interrupting their mission, I needed to pay back them properly for such interruption, and a beautiful massage was certainly a good way to do so.

While also awakening their bodies properly for some post-massage fun.

“Jerk,” they replied soon, once again simultaneously.

I chuckled at their response before giving them another suggestion. “Well, we can skip it if you are not in the mood,” I whispered, but my suggestion had received no answer but a pointed silence. “I thought so,” I answered, not bothering to hide my smirk as I continued.

“Why don’t you girls lay down, and I start the massage to destroy all the stress that you accumulated during your adventures.”

They looked hesitant, mostly because they were annoyed by my teasing rather than a lack of desire for my massage.

so I decided to give a little incentive. “And I’ll start with who manages to lay down first, appropriately dressed for a massage,” I added. “Or...” I tried to continue, to add the words, appropriately undressed, but my little joke was ruined.

Admittedly, considering my little self-indulgent joke had been interrupted by two beautiful girls furiously undressing as they competed to be the first one to lay on the crystal massage tables I had conjured, it wasn't exactly the greatest loss I had ever experienced.

Apparently, their little moment of solidarity wasn't enough to survive the temptation of being the first one in line.

"Amazing effort," I murmured even as I looked at their beautiful bodies as they lay on the crystal surface.

Titania lay on her back, displaying her modest curves directly, her legs parted to give a glimpse of her core, getting wetter by each second in anticipation. Marianne, on the other hand, lay prone, which was supposed to be less sexy than someone laying on her back, but it seemed that Marianne's curves had never heard that fact. Her beautiful plump ass was as attractive as always, begging for my attention, and her breasts, squeezed between her weight and the massage table, created an amazing view to complement it.

I said nothing else as I walked toward them, standing between them. "Who's first?" Marianne murmured, unable to resist the temptation.

"I'm not sure, who do you think was faster?" I asked.

Marianne turned to look at Titania, who was already looking at her. To their credit, even distracted by their desire, they had realized that I had been teasing them, and refused to engage.

Yet, they also wanted to receive a proper massage — and much more — so, despite their frustration, they continued to lay on their massage tables. I chuckled. "I think it's fair to take it as a tie, won't you agree?" I asked.

I received a pair of hesitant nods and prepared myself to start some fun activity.

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[Level: 32 Experience: 524160 / 528000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45



Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6528 / 6528 Mana: 8000 / 8000 ]

#### SKILLS

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Tantric [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter One Hundred Ninety-Nine

As usual, I started with a spell to coat my fingers with massage oil, once again leveraging the more utilitarian aspects of my Biomancy Skill, enjoying the convenience it provided.

[-281 Mana]

My mana consumption was much higher than that trick required, but that wasn't exactly useful. Most of the mana I had spent wasn't consumed by the oil spell, but carefully mixed into the outcome as I prepared for my next trick, ready to deliver a proper infusion of mana along with the massage.

I wanted to do to test the tricks I had learned after working on Janelor.

Marianne and Titania wouldn't benefit from that as intensely as Janelor, but that didn't mean that it would be completely wasteful. Especially since I was carefully manipulating the mana into a warm sensation with the assistance of Tantric.

Marianne's moans rose, more intense than usual, showing her appreciation for my new trick.

"Well, this feels nostalgic," I murmured even as I let my hands dance on Marianne's back, couldn't help but remember how our relationship started, first through trickery, then through addicting her to my touch, making her moan more and more...

"S-shut up," Marianne murmured while I covered her back with the massage oil, clearly feeling self-conscious about the memories. Just not enough to actually ask me to stop, instead arching her back in appreciation.

I chuckled as I finished covering her back, then let the oil warm over her body while I turned to Titania, who was lying on her back.

"Someone is enthusiastic," I murmured with a chuckle even as I caught Titania's gaze, enjoying her blush even before I started working on her body. And, since she lay in such an inviting pose, I decided to take that as an invitation for a more aggressive start.

And started by squeezing her beautiful breasts.

Titania didn't answer, busy moaning as I squeezed her nipples.

"Damn, it just had been a few days, but I missed you two," I said with a smirk even as I let my

hands climb up to her neck, not wanting to push her too fast and too hard because just after a few touches, she was showing the signs of melting.

Yet, even as I slowed down the treatment, I was amazed at the speed Titania was folding, suggesting that, after getting used to the sensation of pleasure, she was developing a weakness to it.

[+500 Experience]

The notification that popped into my sight was certainly as welcome as her moans, giving me a little burst of power to push me toward the next level. I continued to work on her neck as I enjoyed her shivers, signaling her anticipation, filled with desire.

I let my hands wander on her body momentarily to cover the rest of her body with the massage oil before going back to her neck, applying the full range of my massage skills to her in a soft gentleness.

A subtle purr started escaping her mouth soon as my fingers destroyed the stress she had accumulated during her extended mission. Yet, I pulled back to attend to the other naked beauty that was waiting for me, terminated Titania's service momentarily.

Titania sent a fleeting glare toward me as I pulled my hands away, clearly unhappy with the early stop. "We're just warming up, sweetie," I said as I put my hands on Marianne's curvy body once more. "A little patience."

Titania didn't look particularly happy about that idea, but that didn't prevent her from starting to watch me as I started working on Marianne's body properly.

"You're right, a little patience—" Marianne tried to tease Titania, only for her words to fade into a moan as my fingers danced along her spine, finding one of her many sensitive spots to trigger a moan.

It was Titania's turn to chuckle as I continued to tease Marianne...

As much as I wanted to move to the main event, I wanted the girls to rest after their difficult mission as well, so I restricted myself to massaging them for the next several minutes, alternating between them, destroying the stiffness that had been accumulated during their tedious mission.

It was not without its benefits, of course, as playing with Titania gave me rather beautiful

rewards, which, while not enough to make me reach the next level, pushed me to the border of it.

[+1000 Experience]

It was time to push for even more.

I focused on Titania even more, grabbing her legs as I continued to massage her inner thighs, her eyes closed under the invasion of pleasure. Therefore, she didn't notice my spell to get rid of my clothes.

Marianne noticed it, but rather than complaining, she shifted her position to get a better view of the show, her eyes brimming with enthusiasm.

Titania's rumbling and mewling were interrupted when I slid inside her without a warning, the sensation of her warmth enveloping my shaft unmatched.

Though, the emotions triggered by the double-notification were a close second.

[+1000 Experience]

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 76%]

I let my gaze slip back to Marianne, catching her gaze for a fleeting moment, whose lips were curled in amusement as she watched Titania's spectacular moan in amusement. I couldn't help but feel that her amusement was more about the fact that Titania was more hesitant than her in bed than the pleasure she was deriving from the view.

Not that the pleasure she was deriving from the scene was not significant, evidenced by the way her fingers disappeared inside her, dancing around her knob mercilessly.

Watching Marianne was fun, but not as much as watching Titania who was busy gasping and moaning under my surprise assault, the calm yet steady invasion of my shaft working wonders to resolve the last scraps of the stress she was suffering under.

Rather effectively.

Her moans got only more intense as I slid my hands under her hips, raising them to a more convenient angle for my repeated invasions while my fingers dug into her tight ass.

"So, tell me, how was the mission?" I asked with a casualness that contrasted greatly with my

other actions.

“R-right now?” Titania managed to stammer between her moans as she opened her eyes.

“Why not?” I answered, trying to look calm, but unable to prevent an amused quirk of my lips.

Titania’s look of surprise was beautiful. “M-maybe Marianne can explain instead,” she offered.

I looked at Marianne, who was busy enjoying the show we were putting on in a way that kept her fingers very busy. “She is clearly busy, it would be rude to ask her,” I said. Titania sent me a frustrated glare, but that was all she could do, as before she spoke, I quickened my hips, the intensifying pleasure burning her words.

“Don’t tell me you can’t handle it?” Marianne commented from the side between her moans, followed by a chuckle.

Titania’s blush was simply beautiful. “Of course I can,” she declared with a dedication that reminded me of the times I had only seen as the scary head librarian that I could never touch. “The mission started by targeting several rumored undead presence, though we didn’t expect to find much,” Titania said.

“Let me guess, because of some internal analysis, discounting the possibility of a significant undead presence,” I said.

“Exactly, someone was clearly fiddling with the reports to make us underestimate the undead presence. The potential was much more than we expected, ready to invade the nearby cities once the initial armies sieged Silver Spires, making it almost impossible to reinforce the area.”

“Therefore forcing the headmistress to take personal action,” I suggested.

“E-exactly,” Titania said, agreeing with my conclusion before giving a more detailed report of their mission, including the distribution of the undead presence between different bases and the minor challenges they faced.

It didn’t take long for her determination to start fading, her words interrupted by her frequent moans. I had no doubt that, if we were alone, she would have folded already, but with Marianne watching with a smug smirk, occasionally supported by her teasing remarks, Titania persisted in her determination.

And I received my reward soon after.

[+2000 Experience]

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 79%]

[Level Up!]

I didn't even think before selecting my new skill, finally pushing Tantric to the next level.

[Grandmaster Tantric (100/110)]

On the one hand, it was not a good feeling to sacrifice my flexibility, the greatest reason for the chain of success I had been enjoying since that fateful day I had gained my first experience, showing that I wasn't a waste — at least in a world that measured success with martial might.

Not that I could blame them, not with a world rife with danger. I had lost count of the times I would have met an unfortunate end if it wasn't for my rapidly-growing strength, as well as the utility of my growing list of skills.

Yet, ironically, Tantric, despite its abject uselessness in combat, was the only option for me to select to increase my survival ability, for one simple reason.

It worked even when isolated from the System. I didn't know why or how, I didn't even know whether it could be actually relied on or was an illusion.

However, it wasn't the first time I was made to make a choice despite lacking information...

I put my hand on Titania's breasts, invading her Soul Space to reinforce it more, which took more mana than it took me to actually destroy an army with my current skills, but earning a welcome notification in return.

[-2129 Mana]

[+1 Tantric]

"I think that's enough reporting," I said as I grabbed Marianne's hand and pulled her over to Titania, creating a delicious sandwich for my pleasure for my own enjoyment.

"It's time to start the proper celebration."

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[Level: 33 Experience: 528660 / 561000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6732 / 6732 Mana: 6728 / 8250 ]

#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [101/110]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]



## Chapter Two Hundred

The smile bloomed on Marianne's face as she found herself in a new position, one that signified the massage was over.

"About time," she growled as she shifted in her place, trying to get comfortable. Titania said nothing, but that didn't mean her answer was more subdued. Her lips were busy with letting out a delicious moan.

Understandable, as Marianne's shuffle on top of her didn't exactly help her to get calm after her spectacular climax.

I paused for a moment, enjoying the scene of their beautiful bodies rubbing against each other, especially the beautiful sight of their breasts pressing against each other, dominated by the weight of the moment.

Yet, Marianne didn't seem to be happy about that pause. "Hurry up," she whispered, gasping loudly as she did so.

"Such impatience," I whispered even as I slapped her ass, enjoying the moan that escaped her mouth, particularly the way her flesh rippled. "Don't worry, I'll start working on you properly. But first, let's make sure that our dear librarian doesn't say anything. You know that I'm too shy to handle a sudden comment. What if she hurts my confidence."

"Yes. You're a walking embodiment of embarrassment, I'm sure you can't handle a little comment," Marianne said as she chuckled.

"Of course I am," I said, even with the Subterfuge, barely managing to sound serious. "Now, start working on silencing her."

"As you wish," Marianne answered as she leaned down, showing that while she enjoyed the banter, she didn't enjoy it as much as what she wanted to start.

"W-wait —" Titania murmured panicked, but, with the closeness of their lips, that was all she was able to utter before Marianne's lips landed on their target, burying the rest of her attempt rather efficiently. Marianne was more than enthusiastic as she launched her assault, enjoying the sweetness of Titania's mouth.

Though, considering the way their tongue twirled with great practice, I couldn't help but assume our after-battle celebration wasn't the only time they had been practicing that

particular move.

“Not bad,” I said as I twirled my fingers into Marianne’s soft blonde hair, giving just enough pull to extract a little gasp, but not enough to pull her back from the kiss. “You’re certainly benefiting from lots and lots of practice.”

Titania’s tongue stilled at the notification, but Marianne just continued to kiss. Seeing Marianne getting comfortable with some girl-on-girl action was not exactly a big revelation, not with how our little relationship started.

That didn’t mean that it was impossible to interrupt her, of course. There were several ways to do so, ranging in various difficulties and impacts.

I chose the most direct way and slid inside her, not that the simplicity meant the impact was limited. Already aroused from the show she had been watching, the sudden push triggered Marianne, resulting in a spectacular moan that forced her to pull back from the kiss.

One that she didn’t return, but Titania didn’t seem to mind, especially when Marianne started kissing her neck instead, occasionally alternating to light nibbles to trigger her pleasure even more. Titania didn’t respond, too busy moaning in pleasure.

And, keeping her included even gave me a little surprise reward.

[+1000 Experience]

Luckily for Marianne, I was there to compensate for Titania’s lack of response. I grabbed her amazing hips, enjoying their tightness even as I created leverage, then started pushing my hips.

Which came with its own reward.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 76%]

As my hips started picking up speed, Marianne’s moans started to get more frequent, to the point of neglecting Titania’s neck, allowing her to finally get a handle of the haze of the pleasure.

I managed to catch her eyes when Marianne’s back arched after a particularly hard push. “She’s being too loud,” I said to Titania. “Why don’t you help her keep silent so her voice doesn’t alert any nearby beasts.”

As far as the excuses go, that was a rather lazy one, considering that three of us were not only

capable enough to defeat a hostile army theoretically but literally had done so a few days ago, and no monster that could be found in the wild would have been a threat to us.

At least, not any monsters that would still need to depend on our voices to find us.

However, at the moment, with her mind blanked in pleasure, Titania lacked the mental alacrity to point out that fact. Not that she would have chosen to argue at that point even if she was in a better mental state, not with the rush she caught Marianne's lips like she was just waiting for an excuse.

I couldn't help but chuckle at Titania's attitude, impressing me with her shyness. It seemed that her habit of authority was still not translating to the bedroom — or the other places where we experienced our fun.

I decided to help her a bit. "Marianne is moving too much, why don't you help me with that as well by wrapping your beautiful legs around her waist so that she can slow down."

Her embarrassment didn't slow her response to direct order. Her legs, deceptively strong despite their thinness — a fact that I was intimately familiar with — wrapped around Marianne's waist, slowing her wild rocking.

Marianne let out a surprised grunt that managed to escape Titania's attempts to silence her, showing that she was not as intimately familiar with the strength hidden in her legs. Which would have suggested a lack of physical contact between them if it wasn't for the familiarity of her kiss, but with that, the real reason was clear.

Titania had stayed passive enough to keep that as a secret during their little carnal games, to the point that she had never employed her full physical strength even for the purposes of fun.

What a waste, especially with such a soft beauty like Marianne that enjoyed the other side of the little games of domination. Not that seeing my blonde busty healer taking the dominant role for once wasn't extremely entertaining.

[+1000 Experience]

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 78%]

Under the double assault, Marianne's companion progress was paying dividends rather rapidly. I decided to give a little reward as well, the kind that actually impacted her combat ability.

[-2310 Mana]

[+1 Tantric]

Her moan intensified as my mana invaded her body, but she didn't bother to comment on the sudden rush of experience, far too familiar with the phenomenon to bother even wasting a second on that.

I smiled at the relative ease Tantric had gained another small improvement — though I was aware that there wouldn't be a lot of people that would classify spending more than two thousand mana in a single burst as a trivial achievement.

I continued my urgent assault, but not in a steady manner. After all, with the great effort, she was showing, Titania had earned a more direct involvement. I pulled out Marianne — immediately replacing the resulting lack of attention with my fingers — only to slip right back into Titania, which changed their roles about who was responsible for silencing, and who was the one being silenced.

To their credit, their lips never parted even as alternated between them, lost in the pleasure of the moment.

It was a beautiful moment, I decided even as I tightened my grip around Marianne's hair and pushed her down, forcing her to intensify their kiss even as I impaled her repeatedly from behind.

"I'm sure you didn't work closely with the students, but as the head librarian, you need to learn how to take a firm hand with the students. You can't just assume you can intimidate them," I explained, even though I doubted Titania was in a state to process that explanation.

Marianne stiffened slightly, showing that she didn't appreciate my push, but under my merciless pounding, she was unable to comment even before I added a light sprinkle of spanks to the mix.

With no words, the beautiful meadow we were enjoying was filled with moans, spanks, and cries of ecstasy, their attention split between my alternating assault and the attention of each other.

My hips continued to move in an endless rhythm, the growing pleasure allowing me to get more and more

I continued pushing my hips, wanting nothing more than to get lost in pleasure as deeply as the

two beauties in front of me...

[+2000 Experience]

Unfortunately, I had another task.

Understanding what was going on with the Companion Process.

After all, with my growing distrust of the System, it would be a silly thing to continue to rely on the System in such a fundamental aspect of my power.

And, in that area, there were several questions to answer.

Why did completions in Companion Process was rewarding me with incredible bursts of experience? Why it was allowing me to gather mana one at a speed that reached the point of impossible through perks? Why it was giving me incredible perks that were several times more useful than levels — even at the risk of being dangerously explosive?

And, most importantly...

Whether I could replicate it without the assistance of the System...

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[Level: 33 Experience: 532660 / 561000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6732 / 6732 Mana: 6728 / 8250 ]

SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [102/110]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

# Chapter Two Hundred One

Luckily, while I needed to understand better how Companion Node worked, it was not one of the boring, joyless magical research projects. No, it was much more fun.

I continued to slide inside Marianne, enjoying the amazing way her warmth wrapped around my shaft, I split my attention toward the way the Companion Node was getting stronger, enhancing the connection between us.

Naturally, it wasn't the first time I was paying attention to this process, but my growing experience with Divine Spark helped me to notice a lot of details I had missed earlier.

In particular, a particular similarity between the Companion Node and the Divine Spark in its raw form — or what I deemed as the raw form after it had lost its elemental nature with the assistance of Tantric.

I had no idea whether that was actually the case, but I still received a reward in the process.

[+2 Tantric]

Focusing on the way the Companion Process was developing gave me a significant boost on Tantric, more than I had been expecting, especially with its already high attainment as my first Grandmaster skill.

It was supposed to develop slower, which only went further to confirm the link between Tantric and the Companion Process. Although, I couldn't help but wonder about the underlying implications.

Especially since I had learned that I couldn't block the connection between me and the Tantric, implying wasn't coming from the System.

And, if that wasn't coming from the system, maybe it was the case for the Companion Node as well. So, even as my hips rocked hard, alternating between two girls that presented themselves in front of me, each moment enhanced the subtle core of power that was hidden in their soul spaces.

With my current Tantric sensitivity, I could see that, even without the notifications, the Node was getting stronger. Only slightly, but still getting stronger.

Then, I started noticing other important details. There was a flow between the Companion Node

and the system, subtle yet unmistakable in its unique nature.

Divine Spark, in its purified form, reinforcing the girls after coming from the System.

If it wasn't for Grandmaster level Tantric, supported by my phenomenal perception, that might have been the only thing I noticed. But, paying careful attention, I could see that a similar flow of Divine Spark subtly flowed out of my body and mixed with theirs, before coalescing into their Companion Nodes.

It was harder to notice than the interaction between the Node and the System, because the interaction of the system came from a single, linear source, like a drip of water, while from my body, the same amount radiated from a wider area, with the soft consistency of a vapor.

Making it much harder to notice.

The amount was really subtle, not enough to have a noticeable effect on the amount of Divine Spark I had absorbed in my body.

Even then, I frowned at the realization, because I had been hoping that absorbing Divine Spark to enhance my body was permanent.

That would not do, I decided as I tried to exert some control on that flow.

Surprisingly, I had received instant success. Stopping my own Divine Spark flow had been rather simple, much easier than intervening with the System, still, Divine Spark was a more reliable source of power.

And, since I was able to slow down the process, I could use the same trick to quicken it as well. I closed my eyes for a moment and let the Divine Spark evaporate off my body faster, and channeled it to their Companion Nodes.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 86%]

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 85%]

[+2 Tantric]

[+2000 Experience]

And received great success.



“Excellent,” I murmured as I quickened the assault of my hips, and instead focused only on Marianne, sending another wave of power, this time in the form of Mana, giving her more experience.

[-2910 Mana]

Even as I did so, I stopped to think for a moment, trying to decide the relative merits of quickening the Companion Process and wasting some Divine Spark — which was, ultimately, only a fraction of my current capabilities — versus letting the System handle it, saving some in exchange of time it would require to complete the last step.

In the end, I decided on the former. Not because spending several uninterrupted hours with two beautiful women who were willing to do everything to make that period pleasurable was a great chore.

But the unexpected interruptions to my plans were becoming a norm, and it was for the better not to push my luck to see whether I could do it. Spending my own Divine Spark was not the greatest thing, but it was not a good habit to be miserly.

And, the fun part had no problem as well. After all, there was nothing preventing me from extending the fun after the Companion Process had been completed.

So, I decided to change the pace a bit by focusing on Marianne fully. I grabbed her waist, easily lifting her, interrupting their little kiss even as I hooked my arms under her legs while I flared my magic to summon another crystal furniture, this time a chair for myself.

I sat down, with Marianne on my lap, her back pushing against my chest, her amazing breasts free to jiggle with each push, creating a spectacular view in the process.

“More,” Marianne moaned breathlessly while Titania looked at the sudden change of pace with a disappointed gaze.

“As you wish,” I whispered to Marianne’s ear, pulling back only after leaving a soft bite before turning my attention back to Titania, who was watching us with a barely-disguised disappointment in her gaze, not entirely welcoming the sudden change. “Come on, sweetie, what are you waiting for,” I said as I caught her gaze. “Marianne’s breasts certainly need more attention.” Then, I slapped Marianne’s ass. “Don’t they?”

“Yes, they do!” Marianne moaned beautifully, repeating the invitation, which was enough to break Titania’s momentary hesitance. She shuffled until she was sitting on the same crystal she

was lying on a moment ago, close enough to my chair that she could reach Marianne's tits while sitting on the corner of it.

I stopped for a moment to enjoy the sight of Titania's hands disappearing into the great expanse of Marianne's bosom before turning my attention — most of it — back to the changes going on in her soul space, her companion node getting stronger with each second.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 91%]

[+2000 Experience]

Even as the companion node continued to grow, I was getting a better sight of the details of the node. Interestingly, the process itself was less complicated than I expected — just not as simple as the headmistress' direct and violent method, not requiring such a pointless show.

Though, to be fair, unlike the headmistress, I had full control of the Divine Spark in my possession rather than constantly battling against it in an effort to prevent spontaneous combustion.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 94%]

I decided to reward Marianne's help with another burst of experience.

[-1902 Mana]

"Yes," she moaned softly, barely able to gather sufficient breath between her moans. "Another level!"

"Good performance will not go without a reward," I whispered, which earned a satisfied moan from Marianne.

Titania's expression was markedly more pointed, jealousy coloring her face. Yet, she didn't explicitly ask for it, showing her shyness was not an issue that could be cured immediately. "Sorry about that, sweetie, but your level is a bit much to boost easily, but don't worry, I still have a little achievement lined up for you."

That didn't make her give a verbal answer, but I was more than happy to take the way she leaned down to capture Marianne's nipple between her lips as a win.

I tightened my grip on Marianne's hips instead, quickening the assault, catching an interesting detail in the process. The more aroused Marianne was feeling, the more efficient the

companion node creation was going excellently.

Not that it was a shocking revelation at this point, not with the source of my power.

Instead, I let one of my hands slip forward, teasing her knob to enhance her pleasure even further, seconds turning into minutes.

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 100% - Final Stage Completed +20000 Exp]

[Permanent Perk Established: Mana Regeneration]

[Permanent Perk Established: Skill Share]

“Yes, yes, yes!” Marianne moaned repeatedly, but as the pleasure hit her, which was not exactly helped by the intensity of the pleasure combined with the rush of leveling. She collapsed, the pleasure and power mixing enough to push her to the edge of a collapse.

The sensation was amazing, but I still had a frown on my face.

There was no new perk, which was not exactly a good sign. Especially combined with the recent dearth of Achievements I was suffering.

I decided to file that to analyze later. It was unfair to focus on that fact while I had two beautiful naked ladies begging for my attention.

I conjured a bed for Marianne to lie on before I turned my attention back to Titania, who looked fascinated by the explosive intensity of Marianne’s climax. “She lost quickly,” she still managed to stammer.

“Yes, she did,” I said with a big smirk on my face. “But, if you’re feeling she underperformed, let’s see how long you would be able to handle,” I added as I grabbed her arm and pulled her onto my lap.

The same space Marianne had just vacated a second ago, my glistening shaft a sign of her presence...

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[Level: 33 Experience: 556660 / 561000]

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6732 / 6732 Mana: 5863 / 8250 ]

#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [106/110]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Two

I couldn't help but smirk as I looked at the collapsed figures of Titania and Marianne, their exhaustion at the peak after a night filled with debauchery, though, considering the great benefits it had granted to them, I doubted they would mind the exhaustion.

I couldn't say I was unhappy about the results as well.

[Grandmaster Tantric (112/120)]

[Experience: 591170 / 595000]

Not only I had received another level after the completion of the Companion process, but also made decent progress toward another amazing level up.

Too bad the System chose to give me that annoying notification about lacking Divine Spark once again, one that came faster than I expected, invalidating my earlier calculations about Divine Spark and the experience gained.

Like I didn't have enough reasons to be suspicious of the System and its behavior already.

"Let's make sure you girls are secure," I murmured as I looked at the beautiful sight of their naked bodies, wrapped around each other, exhausted and defenseless.

I didn't have the luxury of staying there and protecting them until they woke up, and while a healing spell would wake them up, ruining their beautiful haze after everything we had done would have been equally rude.

I might need to go back to visit the headmistress at the promised meeting time, but I had no intention of sacrificing the security of my girls to do so.

Luckily, there were other alternatives, ones that came in the form of layers and layers of wards.

They weren't as complicated as my usual ones, but considering I wouldn't be there to control the wards, I needed to be careful of an accident. Of course, that limited complication meant the wards wouldn't be as strong, so I compensated by spending a scary amount of mana.

[-6720 Mana]

Then, I left after scribbling a note, leaving them to continue their mission. I didn't like them

staying away from Silver Spires with some of the royal forces trying to keep tabs on them, but summoning them back might be the riskier choice.

Especially since I was yet to truly understand the source of the conflict between the Princess and the rest of her family — and more importantly, the identity and the objective of the mysterious support of the other royals.

It wouldn't be too much of a problem for Titania, who not only had sufficient power, but also lacked easily manipulated levers. That didn't apply to Marianne, who belonged to a minor noble house, one that would only hurt her in such a conflict.

For her, it was safer for her to build a reputation first.

But that was something to be focused on for the future. After one last glance, I summoned another air elemental to go back, once again using the travel time to practice my abilities, to increase my casting abilities without the assistance of the System.

When I arrived, the sun was already halfway up on the horizon, suggesting I was late. Very slightly late, but still late.

Luckily, I was too familiar with the paths around the school to have any problem traveling around, and managed to arrive at the entrance of the tower without extending that delay too much.

Not many people would care about such a slight delay, but I found the door already open, giving me the impression that the headmistress was not one of those.

I climbed the stairs without wasting any time. At the top of the stairs, I found the headmistress waiting for me already, a disapproving expression on her face.

Technically, with her stern expression, supported by her impressive armor and her even more impressive wings, she was supposed to be intimidating. Yet, maybe it was my changing perception of her, driven by a combination of her attitude toward Janelor and the realization of how much she needed me, but I didn't find her threatening.

She almost looked adorable.

"I'm sorry I'm late," I said, still apologizing, even if my mannerism was a touch of perfection. After all, just because I didn't find her intimidating didn't mean that I could treat her without respect outwardly.

She was yet to learn just how much she needed me.

“Make sure it doesn’t happen again,” she said even as she gestured for me to take my usual place for another transfer of Divine Spark. Her tone implied that she would much prefer to send me away for my ‘disrespect’ but the pressure she was under prevented her from being heavy-handed in her punishments.

After all, I was still responsible for keeping Janelor happy.

Her torrent of mana hit me soon after, once again carrying a limited amount of Divine Spark. At this point, the method of pilfering Divine Spark was rather familiar, allowing me to take even more. Of course, it was also about my confidence in the advantages I managed to find, allowing me to be more greedy as I captured the Divine Spark.

Even if she noticed my trick, I could easily use my connection with Janelor to prevent her from punishing me, which would still leave my other cards hidden.

Yet, those thoughts turned out to be unnecessary.

She seemed to be in a hurry to complete my Light Node, as today’s transfer lasted even longer. When it finished, she was panting hard, giving me very visible signs of exhaustion.

I was tempted to show the illusion of a completed node, but not for long. With the System asking for Divine Spark once more before letting me get more experience — a cycle that seemed to shorten significantly with each repeat — I needed an excuse to get more Divine Spark.

And if it exhausted her, tough world. She still owed me for saving Silver Spires.

“Thank you, my lady,” I stood up as I made a very visible show of struggling to stand up, while I was busy locking the Divine Spark behind the storage the System couldn’t reach. I gave an impression of struggle and pain, because it wouldn’t be reasonable to believe I had managed to handle the wild infusion of Spark while it impacted her too much.

She waited silently as I put on a show of struggle. It was not due to kindness, of course, but she was using it as an excuse to hide her own exhaustion, acting like it was a rare display of mercy. She understood the value of posturing — though that shouldn’t be a surprise as she maintained her grip on Silver Spires for two centuries mostly through posturing. The nature of her mana might contrast with that direction, but it was impossible for her not to get at least reasonably competent on a subject after such a time.



Even without the assistance of the System in the form of convenient skills to significantly shorten the learning process, two centuries was sufficient to do so.

Only after finishing my little show and standing up, she spoke, but rather than acknowledging the impact of the transfer, however, she chose to move to the next topic. "Is there anything you need to share about your mission?"

"Nothing in particular," I answered as I put my hands on my knee, selling the idea of exhaustion even more. "She's quite lazy. As long as I prepare her food and make sure nothing interrupts her nap, she's happy."

"Good," she said, though while her answer was simple, her expression was more nuanced, the kind that would make someone with less control over their emotions curse. The fact that she needed to beg Janelor for her help must have been difficult.

Janelor's offhanded comments implied that the headmistress wasn't a particularly important part of her faction, probably equivalent to a middling student, but no matter how long one's life, two centuries were more than enough for a substance to be addictive.

Especially since the substance in question was power, the most addictive substance ever known to mankind. It was clearly not too different from other life forms, like angels and dragons...

"What should I do if she asks something excessive?" I asked, probing her a bit more on the subject.

"Like what?" she asked, though her frown tightened, clearly not enjoying talking about her blackmailer.

"Well, she looks happy for the moment, but what if she gets bored cooped up and wants to go out for a trip?" I asked. "Do I help her, or keep her inside?"

This time, her face actually showed a hint of emotion, an explosive one. "You need to keep her in, no matter what! We can't afford her getting caught by the Eternals, it would ruin everything. Do whatever you need to entertain her."

"As you order, milady," I answered, doing my best to keep my smile more hidden than her growing panic at the suggestion. Her word choice was enough to reveal that she didn't care much about Janelor's fate, but about losing access to the benefits Janelor represented. Otherwise, she wouldn't have mentioned anything about her not being afford such a condition. "I'll do my best to keep her entertained, no matter what."

“Good,” she said as she looked at me. “Then, we can focus on what’s important. Create a container.”

“As you order, milady,” I repeated as I gathered my mana, ready to create the storage she needed.

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[Level: 34 Experience: 591170 / 595000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6936 / 6936 Mana: 8414 / 8500 ]

#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [112/120]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

# Chapter Two Hundred Three

While I created the storage the headmistress requested I had a tense expression, and that was not just a fake expression I wore to trick her about the difficulty of the challenge.

I wanted to mislead her, but that was not the reason for my true tenseness. I was tense because, even at the moment, I wasn't entirely sure the path I had chosen was the right one, and I revealed the correct level of information to her.

As I created the storage, the mana I used to construct it carried little Tantric mana.

Or, more accurately, it didn't carry the Tantric effect. It was hard to describe the effect of Tantric on mana, because it didn't work like the other natures, like elemental or arcana, which just transformed the pure mana into corresponding nature directly.

It took me a long time to understand but Tantric didn't just transform but somehow elevated the intensity of mana — though even that was an inaccurate definition, just the best way I was able to pin the process down.

It was not just a merger like one achieved by merging light and elemental magics. That process, while being extremely explosive, was much easier to understand. It was just that merging different natures, requiring a lot of power to suppress the necessary conflict between them.

Different natures, but the same hierarchy of existence.

The hierarchy of existence was certainly a difficult concept, but one that I wasn't sure I understood correctly. I certainly didn't remember reading it in a book or talking to someone about such a concept. Of course, such instinctual understanding was not entirely unfamiliar. I had received many skills, and every single one of them came bundled with such deep and integrated understanding.

And, that left me with another interesting conundrum. Which skill was responsible for that information?

I was inclined to believe that it was Tantric responsible for this portion.

After all, not only it was about how Tantric was different from other skills — a fact that was getting clear more and more as time passed — but also that realization came after I have just improved Tantric twice in a row, making it my first grandmaster skill. So, assuming Tantric was

the origin of that information was reasonable.

However, under the circumstances, assuming something was true because it was reasonable and fit together well with other circumstantial evidence might be dangerous, leading me to a tunnel of misunderstanding.

After all, we were living in an apocalyptic world that was built over ruins of a battle that included gods in destroyed planes.

Logic was not a rule but a luxury.

Luckily, identifying the source of that scrap of information was not exactly a priority with everything going on.

And, deciding on where Tantric fell under this hierarchy was much easier. It was clearly higher than ordinary mana, and belonged to some group as the divine spark. And even, considering its great effect on the divine spark, even on that scale, it clearly ranked high.

Though, if I asked the headmistress, I had a feeling that I would receive a different classification.

I still remembered her calling the presumed source of the fake companion node I created to trick her as the Degenerate — though, whether she was referring to another user like me or someone that might be compared to her God needed to be clarified.

Ultimately, lack of information was the problem I faced constantly, making it difficult decision whether to reveal the full extent of Tantric's effects or keep it hidden.

So, I decided to play it conservatively. I used only a minuscule amount of Tantric effect as I created the storage, just enough to contain the divine spark successfully while also adding a subtle calming effect, but nothing else. Because, ultimately, it was better to be on the safe side when it came to such matters, especially when dealing with someone like the headmistress, who was yet to earn the privilege of my trust.

Still, even if the effect was subdued compared to its full potential, it was a great improvement over the last display, enough to show that, without a doubt, my mana was superior when it came to containing the divine spark.

And, while my mind was busy with the tangent of Tantric and how it compared to other mana natures and divine sparks, the headmistress was busy examining the effects of my storage,

making a note of the improvement. Seeing the expression of astonishment on her face, impossible to be hidden despite her best efforts — not that her best efforts were particularly difficult to unravel when it come to subterfuge — suggesting that, even my conservative choice was already pushing the limits of credibility.

Dealing with the divine spark might be even harder than I had assumed despite my best efforts to put a safety margin on the concept.

“How...” she murmured as she continued to examine the storage, poking with her own to get a better sense of what was going on, only to fail spectacularly.

I wasn't surprised by her failure to understand its source. I was the one that cast the spell, which gave me a considerably better insight into the process behind it, and even then, it took several hours of repeated experimentation to understand the reason for the Divine Spark's reaction.

When she glanced at me, her suspicion was clear, but unlike the previous time, I was more prepared for that. “Any idea why it's able to contain it successfully this ?” I asked, throwing the problem back to her, like it was something I expected her to know.

“Probably a unique reaction as the power of the Divine Spark is getting settled on your body,” she said, trying to sound certain, but she was not a sufficiently good liar to reflect that — or the fact that she was trying to mislead me intentionally.

“Really, then Titania should be able to do it as well?” I asked, doing my best to hide my smirk as I poked a hole in her explanation.

“Not ... not really,” she answered, her speech slower as she tried to get herself time to find an explanation. “She's not as good when it comes to wards and crafting,” she added quickly.

“If you say so,” I answered with a shrug, amused that she chose to explain that way rather than spinning something about the interaction between my companion node and the new one. It would have been much more believable as an excuse.

It would have been much closer to the truth as well, but that was not really the issue. I was more interested in the fact that she just ignored the possibility of assistance from the companion node, like it was not even possible.

Admittedly, even for me, it took a while to accept that Tantric had such potential, and unlike her, I already knew that Tantric was the gateway to many suspicious things, from helping others

to increasing their level cap to giving more experience in addition to other, more mundane impact like a more fun time in bed and helping transfer mana more easily...

“Still, we need to study it more to make sure we understand its full implications,” she said, trying to look disinterested, only to fail miserably.

Trying to look casually disinterested was one of the things that inexperienced people fail miserably at, mostly because they misunderstood the complexity behind such a trick. That were many simple components to it, from how one positioned their hands to where their gaze pointed. They thought they knew, but the truth...

The hands were usually defined by a lack of action, standing unnaturally still at their sides or being busy with a trinket. The eyes, on the other hand, were either unnaturally still as they maintained eye contact lingering to the point of discomfort, or avoided that connection in the first place.

To her credit, the headmistress managed to show all these traits at the same time despite the supposedly contrasting nature of those moves, cycling through them with great speed.

It was amusing to see her relative competence of Subterfuge — at least one discounted the time she required to develop that — had fallen into pieces completely when she tried to tell a lie.

That, she clearly used very little in her long tenure.

How amusing...

“Try to create a storage in your finger,” she ordered, her explanation once again brief but her expression tight with concentration, unaware that she gave me another little decision challenge, especially with her deliberate wording. Creating mana storage inside a living being was significantly more difficult than doing it externally, and the cost of failure was much higher.

I was already using that trick for a long time, of course, but that didn’t mean it was safe to reveal that to her. Yet, looking at her enthusiastic expression, I decided to show her I could do it.

After all, it was what she needed to solve her problem, and the casualness of her question — one that I could read as genuine — showed that she expected me to succeed, making it a safe choice.

[-931 Mana]

“Here,” I said as I pointed my hand to her, and she channeled her magic through it, storing some Divine Spark inside. Pity I couldn’t just take it and leave, as consuming it would have been suspicious.

I let it go after five minutes, giving her sufficient time to observe. “Sounds simple enough,” I answered.

“Good, now to the next task,” she said, her voice colored with enthusiasm, which was incredible considering her usual subdued emotions.

“Whatever you wish to do, I have nothing else important to address other than paying another visit to Janelor, she asked me to bring breakfast, but if you’re okay with me delaying that...” I said, doing my best to sound casual. It was not true, of course, as rather than visiting Janelor, I wanted to go and dig the little secrets of the princess — the team that was spying on Marianne and Titania was enough to show that was more urgent than I expected.

Yet, it was clearly not something she would care about. Such political tricks were dangerous, but if there was one thing the deadly undead attack taught me, that the headmistress was too passive against the threats that the school faced. Even if she didn’t want to act, she had many tools she could have leveraged before Zokras and his merry band of undead could become a threat too difficult to handle. Only sheer luck — in my peculiar form — prevented Silver Spire from getting terribly damaged.

I had no reason to believe she would be more proactive against the growing political threat. Luckily, I had Janelor as the excuse to act however I wished. And, right now, I deliberately wanted to leave after showing her that my little storage trick was more effective than she expected.

“No, don’t delay that!” she said, her panic clear. After all, my storage trick was only a possible solution to her problems, and until she could make sure that it worked, she wouldn’t dare to make Janelor unhappy. “Go and handle her, then come back.”

“As you wish, milady,” I bowed, giving a little obedient bow, my mind already busy on how to leverage my newfound leverage...

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[Level: 34 Experience: 591170 / 595000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63



Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6936 / 6936 Mana: 8163 / 8500 ]

#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [112/120]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Four

After I left the tower, I didn't waste any time resting and moved to my next target.

My destination, the temporary Royal Quarters, to enjoy the apology breakfast that was promised — well, promised was a rather liberal description of what had happened.

The more accurate definition was to say the one I extorted after not-Delia's poorly thought-out revenge attempt, thinking that her amazing concealment would hide the truth behind her transformation — which, admittedly, was not a bad assumption. Even with all my advantages, I had barely managed to discover the truth behind her disguise and her fake skills, an achievement that relied on a lot of luck.

Though, her fake skills were the reason I let the System absorb a decent portion of the Divine Spark I had managed to steal from the headmistress, preparing myself for the experience I was about to receive. Of course, whether their fake skills would be high enough to trigger was a guess, but I was rather confident in the guess I was making.

I didn't keep the rest of the Divine Spark in the storage either. I purified that through Tantric — a process that had gotten much faster now that I understood the principles behind it, absorbing the transformed Divine Spark, empowering myself. It was not very noticeable, eclipsed by the System, but I still liked the security of having a backup.

I walked slow enough that, when I arrived in front of the Royal Quarters, the job was already complete.

The guards opened the door before I even talked with them, bowing to me respectfully as I stepped inside silently, their bows exaggerated enough to make a clueless observer think that another member of the Royal family was visiting. Such a bow was certainly inappropriate to the point of counting as treason — but I doubted the princess would care much considering she was in the middle of a civil war, only lacking an official declaration.

Once again, a maid led me toward the familiar room, but this time, the maid was wearing a modified uniform, much more revealing than their usual outfit, creating an impressive view as her hips swayed with each step.

A small yet carefully thought little touch to put me in the mood, one that I had no problems enjoying even though I was constructing a spell simultaneously. Dealing with the great change in their attitude was fun, and the implication that they would comply with my demands rather

than do something more aggressive was rather obvious.

Yet it was better safe than sorry, especially since it might easily be a trick from them to make me drop my alertness. Not to mention, with their mysterious abilities challenging my detection capabilities, the need was very clear. Especially if they had some offensive techniques to match their disguise.

Though, hopefully, they were lacking in that aspect.

The maid had led me to the same room I had enjoyed the experience of being hosted for my previous breakfast, yet, this time, it was decorated much differently. The large table was still in place, filled with an even greater number of delicious-smelling delicacies, but everything else was different. The elegant furniture was gone, replaced with huge satin pillows, thin silk curtains, soft smelling incenses, everything in tones of red and purple.

Yet, as the maid closed the door behind me, I turned my attention to the smell of the room, a soft, beautiful incense that sent stirrings inside me. A stirring that was suspiciously strong, but luckily, my healing abilities were up to the task of analyzing its nature.

It was an interesting concoction, I decided as I examined it. Despite its nature to manipulate the body, it didn't trigger the innate resistance given by the Endurance. Understanding the reason for that didn't take long, as rather than trying to infect the body directly, it was replicating an external pheromone, letting the body react naturally to give the response it would, only exaggeratedly.

It was a good technique, one that had interested implications to be used as a poison, which would have bypassed the biggest reason for their relative rarity — the natural resistance of Endurance. Unfortunately, I realized after I analyzed the concoction a few seconds more, using the accelerated thinking provided by my stats, that even the fastest impact would have been measured in weeks and months rather than hours and days...

Which meant it was more or less useless for me.

Then, someone stepped behind the curtains, her body swaying as she walked. Delia, or at least that was her identity visually, but I needed physical contact to make sure whether that was actually the case.

Luckily, with the way she dressed — and not dressed — a few subtle touches were certainly on the table.

She wore a beautiful silk dress, the skirt long enough to reach the floor, and the topside wasn't exactly daintier.

[+500 Experience]

Yet, the sudden notification suggested two things, though only one was new information. The new information aspect was related to her power level. It told me that she once again chose a configuration with a higher level, with some interesting implications about her objectives. She clearly didn't just want to earn my forgiveness, but leverage the opportunity for something more.

The truth behind that objective, only time would tell.

The second part of the information, one that wasn't a surprise, was related to the supposed modesty of her beautiful silk dress. After all, it didn't really matter how much skin the fabric covered, not when it lacked substance enough to reveal everything that lay underneath, not hiding the slightest.

Things that her dress failed to hide included the level of arousal she was feeling, both her wetness and the hardness of her nipples showing it excellently. It was excessive even under the circumstances, suggesting that she didn't have a counter for the aphrodisiac she had set up for me.

How amusing, I thought even as I caught her gaze, enjoying her intense blush.

She might have been being supported by the System to an impressive degree thanks to her fake skills, but her blush clearly showed that it wasn't enough to resist the combination of my charm and her trick.

Certainly not when she still had the amazing memories I had left her with the previous time.

"Welcome back to my modest room," she said, her voice smooth and seductive enough to stir my heart — confirming that at least one of the skills she had chosen was related to her acting capabilities. Both her tone and attitude were too perfect to be natural.

Yet, her skills were not enough to hide the flicker of frustration as she looked at me, confirming her identity as not-Delia without needing to touch her — albeit an interesting way to identify her, suggesting that it was well past the time I discovered her identity.

How entertaining, I thought as I prepared myself for an entertaining struggle. Yet, as much as it

would be fun to play with not-Delia, it wasn't the only objective I had. I wanted to meet with another member of their little royal band of tricksters.

Dealing with the second one and comparing her capabilities with not-Delia would allow me to get a better understanding of the trick they were trying to pull under the circumstances. It would at least show me whether two could use their skill trick and disguise trick at the same time, a knowledge that would have a significant impact on my future strategies.

So, no matter how beautiful not-Delia looked in her Delia disguise, I turned toward the second figure that stepped from behind another thick curtain.

Outwardly, it was the same woman that had kicked me around the training room repeatedly, her body giving the same oppressive aura, her face contorted in frustration and anger, all enough to make me think that she was the same person.

The way she dressed was radically different than Delia, wearing scraps that were barely worthy of a slave. Two scraps of fabric, one wrapped around her waist, one around her chest, but neither piece was large enough to cover the area they were supposed to be covering — and that was before several strategic rips that further compromised its ability to hide her beautiful assets.

Of course, while they looked like scraps at the first glance, they were still made from very expensive magical silk.

Yet, the more impressive part of her outfit was not the fabrics, but the chain, connected to a collar on her neck, further increasing her impression of submissiveness, ready to be grabbed and dragged around, and the magic that was spreading from that item was strong enough to give some trouble to a high-leveled warrior.

And, she was certainly high-leveled, as the notification I received as I looked at her confirmed that conclusion.

[+500 Experience]

The notification was welcome and threatening at the same time. If it wasn't for her smooth, seductive walk, suggesting at a considerable portion of her impressive level had been occupied by seduction abilities and Charisma, I would have been actually afraid, considering the possibility of an ambush.

Still, there was no harm in being cautious. Before I turned my gaze to catch her expression, I let

a strand of my magic spread around the room, assessing the wards again, only to find nothing out of ordinary. The only thing that could be classified as out-of-ordinary was the several layers of isolation wards, making sure no one would be able to observe the room from outside. Yet, from inside, all it would take was a flex of my mana to successfully break it.

It seemed that there was no treachery waiting for me — at least, no direct one, as I certainly had many doubts about the mission they were trying to foist on me.

I smirked as I looked at the eyes of the warrior beauty, expecting to find frustration. Yet, even as I met her gaze, I found a familiar kind of frustration and arousal mixing. Too familiar.

It was the exact same impression the beauty next to her was wearing, implying that their secrets were even deeper than I expected.

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[Level: 34 Experience: 592170 / 595000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6936 / 6936 Mana: 7826 / 8500 ]

#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [112/120]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]



## Chapter Two Hundred Five

I felt tense.

It was a kind of tenseness that I didn't face for a while, finding myself facing a mystery that I didn't expect.

I didn't let that distract me, at least not for more than a moment. After all, it didn't come as a complete surprise. I already knew that I was yet to understand the depth of their trickery, so facing something surprising wasn't an unexpected occurrence.

Naturally, I didn't expect both characters to look at me with the exact same emotional intensity, making it very difficult to identify who was the real not-Delia, and who was copying the other's expression to look like she had a personal problem with me.

There was something refreshing about the situation.

I smirked. It had been a while since I failed to use my sharp perception to discern a situation I found myself in. In a way, it was a fun challenge, especially since I still felt there was no risk of sudden violence — and was confident enough to defend myself if facing such a problem.

After all, if they wanted to take me down, with everything I had revealed them, they would surely prefer challenging me physically — only to learn I wasn't as physically deficient as the abilities I revealed first implied.

I decided to push them. "It's good that you know what's good for you, and decided to follow my orders obediently," I said as I looked at the warrior, determined to watch her expression to identify which one was one I had been working together with for a while.

The expression of the warrior flickered into a more intense form of anger at my mention — one that she managed to erase almost immediately — but that didn't help me to catch their true identity, the same expression appeared on the face of her diplomat version as well, lingering for the exact same time before getting erased.

My little trick failed, but luckily, I didn't have only one arrow in my quiver of trickery. I turned my back on them as I walked toward the table, showing my supreme confidence as I grabbed one of the pastries and took a bite — only to get the subtle presence of even more aphrodisiac, triggering my arousal even more.

Alone, it wouldn't be more than quickening my heartbeat, but combined with the airborne

version, the impact got much stronger, enough to trigger a flame.

A flame that turned into an inferno thanks to the seductive sight in front of me as they walked toward me. I looked at the warrior, and patted my lap. "Since you decided to be my slave for the day to earn your penance, why don't you start feeding me," I suggested as I patted my lap.

Meanwhile, the figure that was currently disguised as Delia walked behind me, only stopping near one of the pillows to pull a little crystal bottle. "You deserve to relax, after all the trouble she had given you," she whispered, her voice beautifully seductive, albeit completely artificial.

On the contrary, the warrior had a more honest expression as she stood in front of me, stiffening reflexively as I put my hand on her beautiful ass, caressing softly.

She was unable to keep herself from turning toward me, barely able to contain her annoyance. I smirked in satisfaction.

Annoying her was fun, but my little move had other benefits than just annoying her.

[+1000 Experience]

The rewards toward a new level were certainly welcome, especially since it gave me a chance to gain even more experience, which would improve my Tantric.

And under the circumstances, improving Tantric certainly had extreme importance, making that improvement as important as other requirements.

Yet, the real benefit of the casual touches was giving me an excuse to inject some mana. Not knowing their levels and their exact skill distribution, I didn't dare to inject mana rashly.

Instead, I let some gather underneath my fingers, a subtle layer that could be easily mistaken for a reflexive reaction.

That amount of mana was too little to use as a probe even with my control, but I opened my mouth to take a bite of the pastry that the warrior brought to my lips, enjoying its crunchy taste, not worrying about that part.

Meanwhile, I felt Delia's hands on my neck, her fingers, covered with massage oil, working on my neck skillfully.

It wasn't like I was in a hurry to leave.

For a while, I maintained my passive state, just enjoying the combined attention my two temporary servants were lavishing on me, each second another second of pleasure.

As they lavished their — reluctant attention — on me, I could feel my shaft growing. Though the sight of their incredible bodies, enhanced by their Charisma, had a big part in that achievement as well.

“Let me make you more comfortable,” Delia murmured as she grabbed my shirt as pulled it up, leaving me half naked, which was a more appropriate state under the circumstances. Yet, when she started massaging me once more, it wasn’t just her hands that pressed against my skin.

It was hard to mistake the certain round softness for anything else, especially when they were covered with massage oil as well.

It was a daring move, one that couldn’t help but make me feel suspicious about her identity. Just yesterday, she was much more reluctant about physical contact, making me doubt that she was the one I had previously interacted with.

Yet, as far as I could see, her emotions were not fake.

[+1500 Experience]

However, the steady flow of experience I enjoyed thanks to their double treatment was certainly a sufficient reason for me to suffer the mystery of unanswered questions for a few minutes.

“Well, you have a good point, but it’s not fair to do things halfway, right?” I said, slapping the warrior’s ass loud enough to echo. “Remove my pants.”

At our level, that much pain barely registered without some magical tricks to enhance its impact, but that didn’t prevent the warrior from avoiding my gaze in a failed attempt to hide her flicker of anger, no doubt not appreciating the indignity.

It was a nice opportunity to push for a bit more. “Do you have a problem with that,” I said even as I grabbed the chain that was connected to her collar, and flooded it with my mana, tightening the collar around her throat.

It was an impressive display of magic, but since I was selling myself as a crafting expert from the beginning, it wasn’t surprising enough to display. Interesting, as she caught my gaze, I felt plenty of anger, yet no fear, not even the reflexive kind.

Which was weird enough to make me struggle to keep a suspicious frown away from my face. Yes, the system provided significant protection thanks to HP, but there were limits to it.

And, a mage that was holding a magical item connected to their throat, an item that was already designed to restrict the target, was enough to bypass that.

Especially with the said item already wrapped around the throat. No matter how much one trusted the one on the opposite side, an instinctual fear rose from one's heart.

Even Helga felt that flicker whenever we experimented on the rougher side of the bedroom fun, and she trusted me enough to open her whole being to me — that instinctual fear was the only reason bondage was any fun.

Yet, the warrior in front of me just felt anger and annoyance, and lacked that instinctual fear, like it was impossible for me to hurt her.

It would be a lie that I wasn't tempted to tighten the collar and actually follow that implied threat, to see how she would react. Pity doing so would ruin everything I had spent days setting up, so I held myself back.

And the fact that she followed her flare of uncaring anger by unbuttoning my pants and pulling them down, freeing my shaft from the building pressure certainly helped.

Then, Delia leaned against my back even harder, her breasts deliciously soft against my muscles, tempting me to forget my anger even without a word. Then, she started whispering. "Please forgive her, she's a bit wild, but she has good intentions," she whispered seductively.

"Well, whether I forgive her disrespect would depend on her performance, and your willingness to cover for your friend, maybe even all the way," I whispered, yet didn't receive the expected sudden tensing from her as well.

Things were getting more interesting.

While the warrior didn't care much about the immediate threat to her life, she reacted to the sight of my throbbing shaft much more viscerally. Her eyes widened in shock even as she put her hands on my legs, clearly enjoying the sight despite the tenseness of the moment.

Distracted by her new view, she missed one important detail. My earlier threat with her collar was just not a show, but also an excuse to inject a great amount of mana into her body, finally allowing me to explore her soul space.

I was quick to send the first spike, which was not strong enough to break through the fake nature of her soul space. It just gave me a breakdown of her skills and level, which was more interesting than I had expected.

The lack of a martial skill didn't surprise me, other than confirming my earlier guess about them not trying to turn that into an ambush halfway in. Instead, more than half of her skills were there to increase her allure, some extremely specific such as dancing and massaging, while others were mostly magical, geared for detection.

A more passive distribution, one that was designed to keep me happy while making sure I didn't pull any trickery.

Smart, but destined to fail due to their assumption that I was an arrogant mage that flaunted his abilities, rather than one that hid most of his tricks.

The next stab of mana was bigger, one that was formed with the assistance of Tantric to allow me to pass through the false facade much more easily to see her real identity. I wondered whether I would find not-Delia under that, or someone else.

[+1 Tantric]

The indirect conclusions were rather inaccurate.

Yet, when I let that bypass the fake soul-space, I froze for a moment.

There was no one underneath!

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[Level: 34 Experience: 594670 / 595000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6936 / 6936 Mana: 7826 / 8500 ]

## SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [113/120]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

## PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Six

I tensed as I processed the extraordinary information that my probe gave me.

There was no doubt about the accuracy of that outcome. I pushed the layer of disguise, and there was no one underneath.

It was supposed to be an impossible conclusion, one that I was supposed to dismiss as a crazy conclusion. Just to make sure, I cast a more ordinary detection spell. It was a healing-based one, essentially a variant of what I had been using to detect the undead, only geared to detect life rather than unlife.

The result told me that, other than the intensity of her life force — which was a very indirect indicator of her level — there was nothing extraordinary about the beauty in front of me.

Someone else might have been more inclined to believe the healing probe, but I had a different idea.

I was certainly more inclined to believe the results of Tantric

That didn't mean I stopped probing, of course. On the contrary, it was just an invitation to intensify my exploration. I repeated my attempt, but this time, I combined my healing spells with Tantric.

A subtle operation.

Well, subtle in terms of the real objective and the aspect of mana, as I also needed an excuse to get a sample to experiment on.

I reached forward and grabbed the deficient fabric she was using as a top. I pulled it off aggressively before she could react at the inversion, while I did so, I made sure to grab one of her hairs and pulled it along.

And, the experiment wasn't exactly without side benefits.

[+1500 Experience]

[Level Up!]

[Grandmaster Tantric (113/130)]

The improvement was certainly welcome, I thought.

Then I turned my focus on the experiment. Not the greatest sample perhaps, but more than enough to start. Despite her angry gasp, she didn't bother to cover her chest, which was an interesting choice that would have surprised me before the earlier conclusion.

But her possible non-existence put the dismissal of her nudity in a new light.

Interesting, not as much as the little mana invasion I directed toward that single hair, healing mixed with Tantric, which evaporated that tiny sample into mana.

Just like a conjured item would have done under attack.

It was not pure mana, I recognized immediately. It reminded me of elemental, but not exactly. It was not a type that I recognized immediately.

Unfortunately, I wasn't yet at a point to focus on that aspect, so I quickly created storage and pulled that mana inside me, to be analyzed later on in case I failed to extract more samples for any reason.

I certainly wasn't afraid of it escaping, as that storage could hold Divine Spark without an issue.

Mana, no matter its nature, was nothing in comparison.

I decided to distract them to focus on my experiment without getting afraid of their interaction. I grabbed the warrior's breasts, squeezing them hard enough to earn a beautiful breast. Their fakeness was unable to reduce the amazing sensation.

Even though the said fakeness reached a degree that was hard to comprehend.

Conjuring a full, working body was a great challenge, especially since it was not a mixture of biological and magic, but pure magic — at least, according to everything I could detect, as I used my connection to replicate the same trick a few times, stealing some extremely small samples from different parts, only for them to turn to be made from that unique form of mana.

[+2000 Experience]

Yet, the notification popped reminded me that, their little conjuration was real enough to actually trick the System.

Fascinating...



Delia distracted me from my thoughts as she leaned to my ear, her breasts once again pressing against my neck. "I'm feeling neglected," she whispered. "Maybe you should pay some attention to me," she followed, but even as she said so, her hand sneaked toward my stomach, caressing my muscles for a fleeting moment before reaching to my shaft, dancing up and down softly.

"Not a bad idea," I said as I turned slightly, capturing her lips in a searing kiss, my tongue invading her mouth aggressively. She accepted that, unaware that I was using the connection to send a similar spike of mana inside her to check her soul space while taking a tissue sample as well.

[+1 Tantric]

Both experiments returned with the same outcome, confirming that Delia was fake as well.

Amusingly, that outcome relaxed me a bit more, because it gave an explanation for two critical questions that were making me doubt my senses. Why they were so willing to turn things into a full sexual encounter rather than trying to minimize the contact, or at least trying to bargain...

And, why they were giving the exact same reactions, the intense reactions I expected from not-Delia.

I was yet to discover how they were being controlled, I was willing to make a very considerable bet on both were controlled by not-Delia.

Moreover, considering the speed of their reactions, their instinctual responses, and their inability to fully erase their emotions, I was willing to believe that the control was more instinctual than deliberate.

Of course, to understand the exact nature, I needed to discover the control method, which certainly wasn't a trivial task.

Luckily, I was not in a hurry to do so. Since not-Delia was kind enough to give me two magical dolls that could still give me experience, I decided to use the opportunity to achieve another level, maybe even more if the Divine Spark I allowed the System to absorb would allow me to go for more.

I pulled back from the kiss even as I wrapped my arm around Delia's waist, and stood up.

The warrior looked shocked at the sudden move — one that I could also see echoing in Delia's

gaze, giving credence to my assumption about both conjurations were controlled by the same person — but before she could react, I grabbed her chain and pulled.

“Stay on all fours,” I ordered as I tugged her chain, feeling much more comfortable pushing her limits more than I would have otherwise tried, knowing that she was just a magical puppet, indirectly managed by the mysterious woman behind it.

She growled in anger while Delia tensed in my arms, but neither followed their reaction with an action, obediently accepting my dominance as I dragged them toward a particularly large crimson cushion in the room.

“You can sit,” I said to Delia even as I grabbed her dress and ripped it off her body. It was already around her waist and wasn’t covering much, but I wanted to get rid of it completely to get an unobstructed view of it.

[+3000 Experience]

Since someone had gone through all the trouble of creating it, it would be a pity not to enjoy it properly.

The warrior growled in anger, only for me to flick her nose. “Bad girl,” I admonished, unable to keep my chuckle down as I saw her anger growing more, treating her like a pet angering her more than anything else I had done.

I acted like I ignored her growing tenseness as I walked her around the room. It was certainly fun, especially with eye candy like Delia sitting on the cushion, her legs parted open invitingly as she did her best to look seductive.

Yet, it wasn’t as effective as her skills would have otherwise allowed, because as the warrior tensed angrily at my treatment, so did Delia, showing the nature of the connection between the two.

And, as I dragged her around, I noticed two important things. First, as I dragged the warrior around the room, the smoothness of her movements was changing slightly. It wasn’t a great degree, one that would have been impossible to detect even with my observational abilities if I hadn’t been looking for it especially.

Yet, considering there was a noticeable difference even with a simple movement like crawling on all fours, the difference would have been much more intense if the magical puppet was fighting or casting spells.

More importantly, by using that performance change, I was able to identify the direction of the controller. It was just behind the wall opposite side of the entrance, in the direction where the girls first appeared, quite near to where Delia was currently sitting with her beautiful legs parted, her wet core begging for my attention.

The second important thing I focused on was the physical differences between Delia and the warrior.

Or, more accurately, the lack of it.

Considering they were magical constructs, I would have expected them to look wildly different. It would have been the smart thing to do to distract people from their nature.

Yet, there was suspiciously little difference between them. The lines of their faces were different, and their blonde hair was in a different shade and model, but that was almost the full extent of it.

Their naked bodies were suspiciously similar, the warrior was slightly more muscular while Delia had marginally bigger breasts, but that was the full extent of the differences. Examining them, I was almost completely sure that their creator was using her own body as the template.

I remembered the first time I had seen the princess and her handmaidens. At that time, I assumed it was something to protect her against assassinations through convenient disguises while using it as an excuse to hide an expert among them — an expert that almost successfully robbed the headmistress — but the recent details I had managed to discover certainly threw that into question.

Maybe they were similar because all of them were magical puppets, constructed from the same mysterious energy.

And, if that assumption was true, not-Delia was the only one that could create such constructs, and she was behind the wall, controlling the two puppets.

More importantly, I had a very good guess about her identity.

“That’s enough walk,” I said suddenly as I dragged the warrior to the large cushion Delia was sitting on.

It was treason to keep such an exalted member of the royalty waiting...

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[Level: 35 Experience: 599670 / 630000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 7140 / 7140 Mana: 8242 / 8750 ]

#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [114/130]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Seven

An enthusiastic smile invaded my face as I threw myself back, only to meet with the comfortable surface of the cushion, large enough to serve as a bed.

Albeit it would be difficult to fit all three of us, I was confident in my abilities to find a way.

I pulled the chain that was connected to the neck of the warrior, quickening her helpless crawl toward the cushion as the chain tightened. It would have been a cruel move if it wasn't for the fact that she was just a construct.

The fact that she was a construct didn't prevent signs of her intense anger, enough to bury her discomfort.

Delia was quick to stand next to me, her beautiful body on display, her amazing nudity and sexy pose almost enough to distract me from the intense, barely hidden anger she wore on her face, matching the one on the face of the warrior.

Of course, Delia's intensity of it was too personal, but knowing she was also a construct, just helped me to make sure there was only one controller.

Also, it was her own fault that she brought the warrior out with a chain. I was just a poor man.

"Why don't you sit down while your friend finishes crawling toward us, just like she deserves," I said, enjoying her impotent anger.

Ultimately, it was her fault for bringing her out with a chain...

She was quick to obey me and sat next to me. I shifted slightly, so that my shaft rested against her legs, my touch enough to awaken her desire, and join to her intense anger.

The best part, the arousal was not fake.

I used the distraction my touch created on the controller to stretch a string of mana and touched the wards that were protecting the room. Most of the wards were strong enough that it would take considerably more than a momentary touch to unravel, but luckily, some of the additional benefits were provided by additional layers.

One of those additional layers was the silencing ward, which took only a touch to modify to allow the sounds from the other side to reach my ear — and only my ear — to avoid the

attention of the decoys.

I had no doubt about that aspect. If there was one emotion I could distinguish easily, it was the ability to see whether it was genuine arousal. With the way I leveled, there was simply no doubt about that.

And Delia's arousal boomed without the slightest restriction, a great contrast to the last time we shared a breakfast where every move of hers was intensely guarded, and only the intensity of her need and my masterful manipulations loosened her defenses.

It seemed that the princess had a different approach to physical fun while not using her own body to do so.

She had shown that she wasn't exactly very resistant to the temptation of pleasure, both then and now. Of course, at this point, the identity of the controller being the princess was still a theory.

But I was confident in my guess.

Still, it was hard to argue the fact that, at this moment, knowing the true identity of the controller was just for my personal edification, and not a condition to enjoy the constructs that had been created for me.

And enjoy them, I did.

"Oh," Delia gasped as I grabbed her breast, squeezing hard to enjoy their amazing texture, my other hand still tugging the warrior closer. Once again, I decided to multitask, and filled Delia's body with my mana.

Not even bothering to hide.

"W-what are you doing?" she gasped in shock as she realized that, but despite the gasp, her tone lacked the fear someone else would have carried against such a move, nor did she try to defend herself.

Perks of interacting through a decoy.

That disconnected attitude didn't last for long, not when I cast a little biomancy spell, one that increased her sensitivity a few times, twisting her nipple as I did so.

[-62 Mana]

“W-what are you doing?” she repeated, this time with an urgency in her tone. I smiled, but it wasn’t Delia’s reaction that surprised me.

But a soft cry, unmistakably female, very similar to the voice of Delia, but with certain minor differences. It came from the other side of the wall, audible without alerting Delia and the warrior thanks to the modifications I applied on the silencing ward.

“Punishing you, of course,” I said as I twisted her nipple again, but this time, there was no gasp of pain from behind the wall. The reason...

The sudden flare of mana appeared from the other side of the wall before it traveled toward Delia, modifying the structure of the decoy.

The princess was cheating.

It didn’t annoy me, because that mana stream was useful to me in many other ways. It was a subtle manipulation, one that I would have missed if I wasn’t directly observing the termination point of the connection, but with that, I was able to identify the flow — one that I followed by sending a small flicker of mana back.

Trying to intrude on someone from such a great distance would have been difficult if I couldn’t use her connection as a pathway, using it as a track. Even then, I wasn’t able to do much through that trick. It just confirmed my earlier assumption.

It was the woman I named as not-Delia on the other side of the wall, managing the two decoys.

“Oh, it’s too much,” Delia moaned as I continued to squeeze her breast, but the earlier intense urgency was gone, replaced by a fake tone. A believable fake tone thanks to all the acting and seduction skills the magical puppet contained, but fake nonetheless.

I had to admit, the princess’ ability to adjust the feedback she was receiving ruined the pleasure I was receiving from the moment significantly, enough to tempt me to stop.

I would have done so if it wasn’t for the notification I received.

[+2500 Experience]

I might be aware of the fake nature of the view in front of me, but the same didn’t apply to the system. That failure had quite a few interesting implications for the limitation of the System.

And it would be lying to say if the free flow of experience was unwelcome.



I leaned against Delia, and without a warning, pulled the warrior on my lap, sheathing inside her mercilessly, using the same sensitivity trick to enhance her pleasure before the princess could adjust.

My reward, was another muffled moan from the other side of the room.

Compared to her moans, the moans of her magical puppets didn't entertain me as much. Instead, I turned to Delia and asked a question while squeezing her breast. "Tell me, what exactly is this mission, and why are you that desperate to actually make someone else take the blame for it?"

If there was one other benefit to the little show I was putting on, it sufficiently distracted the princess, which delayed the answer quite a bit. "T-that's not the —" she started, only for me to slap her breast, and the princess made a noise once more, this time moaning in shock, louder than the previous ones.

Of course, that was not the only trick I pulled. I timed that spank in an attempt to interfere with her connection with the puppet. Faking a completely new response would have been difficult, but enhancing an already existent communication was a much simpler trick.

And, since the princess didn't react it by attacking — or retreating — but trying to adjust the sensitivity of her puppet, it was also not as obvious as I feared.

I watched her adjustments carefully, my mana senses working in conjunction with the understanding given to me by Biomancy skill working wonders to understand her tricks.

It didn't take long for me to get a rudimentary control. Her tricks were certainly crude, little more than weakening or increasing all senses in a wholesale manner. And, since her mana manipulation abilities were smooth enough to achieve a more selective adjustment, I was more inclined to assume she lacked a healing-based skill to direct her.

Interesting, especially when considered together with her incredible ability to create fake skills. Pity the flimsy connection between us was not enough to explore the reason for that particular fact.

Still, it was good to know that there were limitations to such a scary ability.

With her controller distracted, it took a while for the puppet to give the answer — not that I minded it while the second puppet allowed me to fill the time by allowing me to get closer to another level up.

[+2000 Experience]

“But, the princess —“ Delia managed to say, only to be interrupted by another spank — with the feedback enhanced, making the princess moan once more.

I decided to tease the princess a bit more. “Since she sent you two here to whore yourselves, the princess clearly needs this mission. What do you think I would not only decide not to do it, but go have a talk with the headmistress and make sure no one else from the school is allowed to do it?”

“No, please!” Delia gasped, this time a genuine panic — as indicated by a gasp that came from the other side of the room.

“Then, speak. I want every single detail about it. For example, why this mission is important enough that the other princes already started sending their agents to observe Silver Spires?”

“T-they wouldn’t—“ she started, only to receive another slap to her beautiful tits, the impact once again enough to make the princess gasp in pain, yet she was distracted enough to realize I had fiddled with her ward that was supposed to keep her silent, her beautiful real moans mixing with the fake gasps of her puppets.

“Honey, just because I’m paying attention to this slut —“ I said, slapping her ass to highlight my point — once again enhanced to get a moan off the princess — “... doesn’t mean that I suddenly lost my ability to think. The princess suddenly decides someone working directly under the headmistress to a sensitive mission in the capital rather than one of her loyal and capable handmaidens,” I murmured, then smirked. “Like the one that was good enough to actually get into the headmistress’ office without being noticed if I hadn’t been there,” I added.

This time, her reaction was much more spectacular. Both puppets started to gather their mana, ready to attack, but I just grabbed the chain around the throat of the warrior, activating the spell I buried on it while putting my other hand on Delia, challenging her attempt to gather mana.

Interestingly, while I felt the princess also gather her mana, it was much less than I expected, probably as a result of the puppets occupying her capabilities.

“Calm down, the headmistress doesn’t know about that yet,” I said with a soothing voice, then grabbed Delia’s tits once again.

“And, she wouldn’t know as long as you continue to be a good puppet,” I added, unable to

suppress the temptation of throwing a little hint at the end.

They stilled, their mana calming down. I chuckled as I grabbed the hips of the warrior and quickened my invasion, using her to push toward the next level while they tried to get a handle on the latest revelation.

The visit was developing in a more interesting direction than I first expected...

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[Level: 35 Experience: 604170 / 630000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 7140 / 7140 Mana: 8561 / 8750 ]

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Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

## PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Eight

Silence ruled the room, only interrupted by the clapping of my body against the warrior, drilling inside her aggressively.

Pity that the realization of her nature as a magical puppet reduced the pleasure I was receiving from her significantly. Luckily, not to the point of ruining it completely, especially after I had discovered a way to amplify their connection with the controller and enhance her pleasure.

It was possible only because there was no real distinction between her control and the feedback she received from them. She was able to reduce the impact somewhat, but blocking it completely was not an option.

And, I had already discovered the ability to interfere with that connection, increasing the feedback she was receiving despite her best attempts to muffle the connection.

It was not a move completely free of risk, and doing so was certainly different than my earlier actions, but finally penetrating the veil of mystery that surrounded her, I once again had the luxury of taking some calculated risks rather than playing save.

Albeit, the implication of her abilities was certainly interesting. On the one hand, they were certainly more impressive than I had expected. Creating both realistic puppets with their own levels and abilities had many potentials. Especially considering they could function as real people, to the point it actually tricked my detection capabilities.

Not to mention, tricking the System as well, as evidenced by the notification I received.

[+1000 Experience]

Yet, the more I learned about her impressive abilities, the less threatening she became. The reason was twofold. The first part was the clear limitation of the clone ability. I doubted that she would miss using her fake skills in such an important situation if she had other options.

Certainly not when skills like healing would have solved most of her problems.

Ironically, that little problem wouldn't have been a big drawback in combat. There were many spells that could be used to dull the sense of pain of the puppets, protecting the controller from the more unpleasant aspects of the deep connection.

The same didn't apply to a seduction mission, especially not when the target was an expert

mage. Using such a spell would be an excellent cause for suspicion.

It was completely redundant at this point, of course. The poor princess didn't know her secrets were already exposed, making her struggle against the feedback from her puppets her warrior puppet a vain struggle. Not for nothing, of course, as her moans certainly helped me with my mood.

Unaware of her situation, she continued struggling against the feedback. I didn't bother pacing myself, neither in terms of my physical effort, nor in terms of enhancing the feedback. The monumental reveal about her attempted thievery in the headmistress' office being discovered distracted her from focusing on why she started receiving such an intense flow of feedback.

That dilemma carried my thoughts to the second drawback of her abilities — thought that was less of a fundamental aspect, and more about her unique circumstances.

She was the only one that could use that ability.

Initially, I was reluctant to challenge her little group, because I was under impression that she had a small cadre of loyal followers, which, when combined with the ability to create fake skills and configure their stats based on the requirements of the situation, would have created an intimidating and dangerous challenge.

Yet, the fact that she was handling a task as unglamorous as a seduction mission — to convince the target to forgive her when she tried to take revenge for her loss of control due to pleasure — strongly implied that no one else could replicate her ability.

Either the ability was unique to her, or she didn't trust anyone.

It didn't matter which was the case. Either way, it significantly degraded the dangerous potential she represented, making it viable for me to finally start poking into the mysteries that surrounded her.

And, there were a lot of mysteries that needed to be unraveled. Important questions. Why was she suddenly fighting with the other members of the royal family? Why did a faction of Eternals decide to support the other princes? How could she actually create fake skills and magical puppets realistic enough to actually trick the system?

Compared to that, the exact nature of the mission she wanted to send me to the capital, and the nature of the so-called keepsake were certainly a lesser mystery.

But the lesser nature of it didn't make it any less important.

After all, one first needed to find where the yarn started before unraveling a mess.

"About the mission," I reminded the princess through Delia, even as I grabbed her breast for contrast while the warrior continued to jump up and down. "Tell me why your princess is desperate enough to make two of her most loyal supporters whore themselves," I said, then followed with a chuckle. "Not that you two seem to be minding," I added when Delia echoed the moan of the warrior.

The pleasure echoing between the two was truly making a challenge for the princess to stay silent, her own moans echoing between her puppets — still under the impression that the isolation wards she created holding strong.

"It's a personal mission, but one that was of utter importance to the princess," Delia started, launching a detailed explanation about the challenges of the mission.

I had to admire the princess' willpower and political acumen, as even with the constant distraction she was struggling under, she was able to deliver her expression perfectly, focusing on the tactical challenges of the mission more and more, doing her best to pull away me from the more important question.

Like, what was the item that she went all this trouble to acquire? Or whether the item carried any real importance in the first place, or the mission was there just to pull the headmistress into her political battle.

I didn't ask those questions, giving her the impression that her distraction attempt was successful. I did so, because I wanted to show her that two beautiful women working together on me would work wonders to distract me.

I certainly wouldn't mind a repeat the next time she wanted something, and there were other rewards to that.

[+3000 Experience]

As her explanation continued, I continued to ram into the beautiful entrance of the warrior while squeezing Delia's breasts, their supple bodies creating an amazing view in front of me. As I continued that, I asked some operational questions to Delia, reinforcing the impression that I was lost in the operational details of the mission.

Convincing the princess that it was a viable method of tricking me into doing what she wanted was the superior choice.

With my growing understanding of her abilities, I finally had the courage to sneak into her residence, poking around to discover her secrets. I could use a more direct approach whenever I wanted, after all.

With that decision done, I turned my attention to the two magical constructs that were doing wonders allowing me to teach the princess the meaning of pleasure remotely. Still, I marveled at the expanse of flesh sprawled in front of me, drinking the alluring sight of the magical marvel in front of me.

As the princess' explanation — through Delia — started to get more and more useless as she got lost in details, I focused my attention on the next challenge — that whether I could make the princess collapse through indirect pleasure.

For that aim, I cast a spell to make Delia float, and bring her above me, her legs on my shoulders, her core inches away from my lips. Once again, I dove into her delicious treasure, my tongue lashing out like a parched man stumbling across an oasis, enjoying her wetness.

Three sources of moans mixed — two puppets and the princess — into a beautiful symphony as I worked on my assault, my physical abilities targeting the puppets while my magical trickeries were busy enhancing the feedback those puppets were sent to the princess, creating a beautiful harmony.

Soon, the princess' attempts to explain the mission stopped completely as she turned her full attention to handle the intense assault of pleasure for several uninterrupted minutes.

[+5000 Experience]

Yet, as I cycled through positions, I noticed one very important detail — through my constant connection with the mana string she was using to control the puppets. Her control was getting rougher and rougher, and while the intense pleasure that made it hard for her to think was a factor, I also started to see the more ordinary signs of exhaustion.

Managing two puppets at the same time was clearly an exhausting challenge for her.

That wasn't enough to earn my mercy, not when she was ruthless enough to pull me in her political games — clearly hoping to plunge all Silver Spires into that endless pit — even as she continued to lose ground in other aspects.



I continued to show her the extent of my carnal abilities as our bodies wrapped and danced, kisses merging into blowjobs, spanks, and chains leveraged aggressively, feeling curious when the princess would finally ask for an end.

She managed to resist for almost an hour, but before it ended, I received several other notifications.

[+27204 Experience]

[Level Up!]

[Grandmaster Tantric (113/140)]

[Warning! Divine Spark is depleted. Connect with more Divine Sparks to continue supporting the System of ———]

Leveling up was certainly nice, but the pleasure it generated was quickly countered by the other notification about lack of experience, especially since I had fed the System with Divine Spark several times, only for its effectiveness to lessen significantly with each repeat.

The system was getting greedier.

“I — I don’t think I can last for more,” Delia gasped as I filled her again. Interestingly, through the connection, I could feel that it was the princess who was on the edge of a collapse. The endless pleasure, combined with the strain of maintaining two puppets proved too much for her.

“That was a nice apology,” I said as I looked at her, enjoying the way the connection continued to flicker. I was tempted to tell her that it was still not enough to earn a proper apology, but with the System once again asking for Divine Spark I had no practical reason to extend it.

Also, I was afraid that the princess would just collapse if I pushed her more, which would have likely caused her magical puppets to stop working, which would force me to confront her.

I would rather do that on my own terms.

I smirked at the state of her exhaustion — felt through the connection with her puppets — even as I quickly fixed my clothing and walked toward the door.

“W-will you do the mission?” muttered Delia.

“Sure, why not,” I answered. “You certainly worked hard to earn that answer.” Just like that, despite her exhaustion, anger flared on her face, tempting me to push a bit more.

Instead, I left the room, leaving them alone...

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Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

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#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [114/140]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

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## Chapter Two Hundred Nine

I didn't leave them alone for long, of course. The moment I was out of the guards of the royal residence, I cast a spell to erase my presence and returned.

The only reason I went through that in the first place was the number of maids walking in the corridors, and I didn't want them panicking about my sudden disappearance.

And, as I walked around the building and reached one of the less-defended spots — which was made easy thanks to several days of recon— I wondered whether it was appropriate to call them they. After all, there were not three people, but just the princess, and two of her puppets.

Two very realistic puppets.

It was a trivial problem, but not an easy one.

In comparison sneaking back into the residence of the princess was both trivial and easy.

The fake orgy — it was entertaining, certainly, but that didn't change its weird fake nature — I had just gone through had been beneficial in many different aspects.

It breached another layer of the mystery around the princess, one that significantly reduced the intimidation that came from the shadow of unknown abilities.

It also helped me to level up, which was always a welcome side benefit.

Yet, the benefits of the extended orgy weren't that limited. During the encounter, I had used a lot of mana, and while most of it was focused on indirectly observing the princess — who was on the edge of total collapse due to exhaustion and indirect arousal — quite a bit of it was directed to the wards around the room, leveraging her distraction.

Using the benefit of that interference, I managed to pass through the wards with trivial ease after I moved through the corridors and arrived at the destination, a combination of my agility and an illusion spell enough to keep me protected, now that I was confident that I wouldn't come across a random bystander over level thirty.

I still made sure to check the maids and soldiers I came across as I walked, just to confirm that. They were just ordinary people, none of them a threat.

I couldn't help but chuckle at the thought as the realization hit. Even the weakest maid was

higher than level five, and the average guard was well above ten, creating an intimidating group that could be extremely threatening.

There was a time, not too long ago, even one level ten warrior created an unsurmountable barrier for me.

I was entertained by the sudden realization and the changes in my own perspective, but not enough to stop my quick steps, until I arrived at my destination.

Just in time, as I managed to catch the princess in the middle of the room, in front of the half-dissolved conjurations of Delia and the warrior puppets, slowly unraveling them and storing the mana into a large metal vase studded with an incredible number of gems.

I only glanced at the metal vase, as it was not only a storage item, but also inferior to anything I could create in less than an hour. It could store mana, but not very well, and not for long.

I needed to focus on the mana flow, but my attention was stolen by the way she dressed. She was just wearing a half-loosened corset and panties, both drenched with sweat and arousal, showing that resisting my indirect touches — especially after I had elevated the reaction through her connection.

After working with her magical puppets that were created in her own image, her half-naked body was mostly familiar, but that didn't make examining her body any less fun. After all, no matter how beautiful, there was a difference between a magical puppet and reality.

Not to mention, seeing her hot and bothered after the show was much better — especially since she was still clearly at the edge, busy handling the puppets to address the challenge she faced.

As much as I would have preferred to watch the rise and fall of her beautiful bosom, I had magical issues I needed to focus on. First, I fed a minuscule amount of Divine Spark to the system, and received a little helpful notification back.

[Level Difference of five or more! No Experience]

At the moment, she was weak enough not to provide me with any experience, showing that her level was low. Of course, under my circumstances, low could mean anything less than thirty, but still, it allowed me to take the next step without much concern.

[-58 Mana]

I carefully extended my mana to the distance. Normally, it would have been a risky behavior, but luckily, regardless of her level, the princess was busy trying to reabsorb the mana that she used to construct her puppets back into the container. The task not only occupied her attention significantly, but also filled the background with mana, giving enough concealment to keep my string hidden.

As I got closer to the flickers of magic, I couldn't help but feel familiar with the nature of the mana that she was letting out. It was familiar to another type of mana, but since it was heavily modified, it was different enough to prevent me from pinning it.

It slipped into her body without an issue, then reached her Soul Space...

Only to make me freeze in shock as I took a note of her level.

She was below level ten.

What an interesting little detail, I thought, though I couldn't help but admire her, as achieving what she was able to achieve without significant assistance from the system was impressive, even if she had the resources of the royal family to assist her.

Yet, the enormity of her achievement soon lost its significance as I noticed something else, something more important.

Divine Spark was flowing freely in her Soul Space.

I couldn't help but focus on the way she was storing and using Divine spark. First, I focused on the storage aspect. I had dealt with Divine Spark in several forms, but every time, the only way to achieve that was to lock it behind strong storage. Both the Companion Node my system created and the Light node the headmistress created worked on that principle.

Even the way the headmistress kept the excessive amount of Divine Spark she was barely able to contain in her own body, using the nature of her body to keep it contained despite the costs.

I never even thought letting the Divine Spark flow freely in Soul Space was possible without the system devouring it.

I had to apply a considerable number of tricks to prevent the system from devouring it, even after locking it. And the headmistress managed that while using it because she not only didn't have a system, but also lived under oppressive wards that were fueled with oppressive Darkness wards.

Then, it clicked, as I managed to remember why I found the Divine Spark in her core familiar. It was the Darkness Spark. It just took a while for me to match that, because I didn't directly interact with the ward.

And just like that, a few things worked wonders. Considering the way both the headmistress and the princess were using, it was clear that Darkness Spark had the ability to trick the system — as evidenced by the puppets that could trick the system or wards that could block its detection capabilities without actually restricting the abilities coming from it.

It also explained why the princess had risked so much to breach the headmistress' office despite desperately relying on her goodwill for protection. It was about the Darkness Spark, although whether she just wanted to confirm its presence or wanted to steal it was still not certain.

There was even a possibility that she actually wanted to take down the ward to kill the headmistress, which would have worked perfectly considering the trouble she was having to contain her Light Spark, but that was not a likely case.

Viability aside, it required a very intimate knowledge of the headmistress' exact circumstances, and even for me, it took quite a bit to collect that information.

So, I was willing to write that part off as a coincidence, especially since she had made no follow-up in that direction.

I focused on the next part of my indirect examination.

The way the princess' soul space was interacting with the Divine Spark was interesting enough to get my full attention despite the amazing view in front of me as the princess continued to unravel her puppets — proving just how much of complicated it was.

The first great difference was easy to identify. The Darkness Spark was floating in her Soul Space freely rather than gathered into a tight clump. It was not something I could replicate that, at least not without the system absorbing it aggressively.

She was able to do that, because, for some reason, the System was unable to detect the Darkness Spark properly. Probably about the conceptual nature of the Divine Spark. Just like the Light Spark working wonders as a destructive weapon, the Darkness Spark worked amazingly to hide.

And to create puppets, I mentally added as I continued to examine her Soul Space while she was busy unraveling her puppets, her mana interacting with the freely flowing Divine Spark in a very

unique way, imbued with a unique nature.

While the process of doing so was more complicated than the Light Node helping the transformation of mana, it was also much more flexible. Compared to the flexibility she was showing, the nodes were much simpler.

Even with the potential advantages the Darkness Spark provided, I doubted that one could simply create fake soul spaces and magical puppets realistic enough to trick the System.

Of course, that flexibility was not without a cost, as the way she was using the Spark was significantly more complicated, which came with the cost of exhaustion.

So, as she finished unraveling the last string of mana from the puppets, her efficiency of storing the mana fell lower and lower, blanketing the room with mana — mana that felt the touch of her Darkness Spark twice, blanketing the room with enough energy to provide me with the perfect cover.

All I needed to do was to decide what I would do next...

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#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

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#### COMPANIONS

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[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Ten

Some decisions were difficult, requiring hours of deliberate consideration, measuring every single advantage and disadvantage to give a nuanced and careful decision.

Some were not.

Luckily for me, watching a beautiful yet exhausted princess saunter toward the nearest pillow in a room blanketed by her own mana, enough to blind her to any kind of spell, firmly belonged to the letter category.

Especially since she sat down on the same pillow that I had been occupying moments ago. And, considering the amount of time I had spent on that pillow testing the limits of her puppets' endurance, I wasn't willing to write it off as accidental.

She was quick to confirm that when, rather than closing her eyes to sleep, to address her exhaustion, she parted her legs and placed her fingers on her panties, doing a familiar circular movement to address the aftereffects of her little subterfuge.

Though, considering the speed her fingers worked, I realized that I might have overdone the teasing aspect of my little trick a bit — or, misread her sensitivity to the pleasure.

Or, more accurately, I had forgotten it under the heat of the moment, I realized. After all, in the previous encounter I had with Delia, when I had first discovered her subterfuge, she was not using a puppet but was there physically under a disguise, and it didn't take much to take her down then.

And that time, she had her fake skills to help.

I slipped through the wards and walked into the room once more, relying on the excessive mana that still filled the room to make my approach even more unnoticeable as I slowly closed in the distance.

The thick blanket of mana helped me adjust my clothing, and soon, my clothes turned into a long, oppressive robe, one that was designed in the exact style the headmistress wore in her attempt to look like a dark abomination, though with three differences.

The robe is way gray rather than black. I didn't copy her fake hunchback. And most importantly, I didn't copy the oppressive fake aura of her that had first made me mark her as a potential undead.

No need to kill the mood.

Still, the costume was a good choice to give the best of both worlds. It would allow me to confront the princess — which was a viable strategy now that I had a reasonable understanding of her capabilities and limitations — but also, depending on how our discussion developed, it gave me the chance to keep my other personality intact.

There was no harm in insurance.

“I hope I’m not interrupting,” I said as I stood directly in front of her, letting the illusion slowly disappear and revealing myself.

She said nothing, just freezing as she looked at me, fear in her eyes. I realized my mistake a moment later. She had clearly mistaken me for an assassin, which was a big problem considering her position.

I fixed that misunderstanding, but not before letting that moment stretch for a couple seconds, letting her taste the fear, not reacting immediately. Even her mana was immobile. “I’m here about the headmistress,” I said, using a different, calmer tone than my earlier speech.

A small adjustment in cadence and tone, and it was impossible for her to realize we were the same person.

“The headmistress sent you,” she said in an attempt to get herself some time. To her credit, despite the earlier scare, she managed to deliver those words with an impressive calm tone. If closed my eyes, I wouldn’t have guessed they came from a half-naked princess that just went through an assassination scare.

I had to admit, she had strong nerves, enough to push the fear back easily. That would have made me more annoyed if I was planning to rely on fear to unbalance her.

Luckily, she had already given me a much better tool to tease and manipulate her. “No, that implies I’m her junior,” I said even as I waved my hand and magically dragged a chair, enjoying the way she tensed even more. Not because of the spell itself, as it was simple enough for someone with just a novice Arcana capabilities to achieve, especially not under her wards. “I’m just here to talk about her.”

But doing so without leaking even the slightest bit of mana was more impressive, reinforcing the intimidating aura of my current disguise.

Not all threats need to be delivered directly.

As she tried to stand up, I gestured for her to stop, moving away from the intimidation to other aspects. "Please, don't stop in my account. Interrupting you is rude enough."

"N-not a problem," she stammered, her earlier confidence suddenly staggering as I turned my attention to her carnal nature as she repositioned herself, closing her legs to hide the most revealing aspect of her clothing, but noticing my teasing smile, she stopped her attempts to fix her clothing, thinking that I wanted to leverage her dressing process to weaken her position.

She managed to suppress the outward signs of her shame quickly as she adjusted her stance, straightening her back even though doing so enhanced her cleavage even more.

This time, I let a momentary frown appear on my face, which earned a small display of satisfaction from her as she maintained her revealing stance.

A frown that was the exact opposite of what I was feeling. In certain situations, I loved dealing with experts. Their instinctual expertise made it even easier to manipulate them. I just need to give the slightest implication of my strategy, and she already 'countered' it perfectly.

A response that not only locked her to a weaker and uncomfortable position, but also gave me an amazing view. And, to make things even better, I saw that realization in her gaze a moment later, realizing the absurdity of her reaction, driven by a combination of her political reflexes and her lingering arousal.

"How can I help an exalted guest, strong enough to refer her as his junior," she said even as she took a stock of the way I dressed. A light of recognition appeared on her gaze, showing that she didn't miss the stylistic choices I made on my robe.

Yet, she was still careful enough not to utter anything about that. After all, my appearance was sufficiently mysterious, and if her information about the headmistress was as limited as I assumed, it was not out of question for the headmistress to be a part of a group, at least not to a point of calling me out.

Her subtle yet growing tenseness confirmed that guess.

How interesting, I thought even as I rapidly adjusted my plan, which took only a couple of seconds, a time that worked wonders to increase her stress.

"So," I murmured slowly. "You're the little annoyance that was giving all that trouble to my

coworker, what a naughty girl.” I did my best to push a careless attitude as I turned my gaze on her cleavage, acting like revealing my identity was an act of distraction that could only come from supreme confidence, ‘revealing’ an important clue about my identity.

“Giving trouble to your coworker?” she asked with a trembling voice. “Sorry if it sounds disrespectful, but I don’t remember doing anything.”

“Oh, you’re saying that breaking into her office, or trying to suborn her employees for dangerous missions with extreme political consequences that would pit her against a mysterious organization that dismantled your power base completely is an accident.”

I loved the way she tensed despite her best efforts. She was good, but not good enough to completely hide the emotional weight of revealing two of her most important undercover activities at the same time, a combination that was enough to turn her into an enemy of Silver Spires — not exactly a welcome outcome in her current situation.

Our current level difference just enhanced the hopelessness of her situation.

And, the beauty of those words was the impact was not limited to it. I also confirmed that I was at the same level as the headmistress while also implying that both of us were a part of the bigger, more mysterious organization.

I wasn’t shocked by her willingness to believe that fact, considering her own powerbase was dismantled completely by a similarly mysterious organization.

Yet, as I waited, I could feel her shock getting more intense than I was expecting, though only when I noticed signs of fear, did I realize the nature of her misunderstanding.

I was tempted to let her simmer with that misunderstanding, but seeing her fear despite her resistance to it, it was clear that pushing her in that direction had the risk of shattering her completely.

And I certainly didn’t want to break my first royal ‘friend’. She had so much potential for fun.

I still waited a second before dispelling her growing fear. “No need to fear, I’m not from that organization that ruined your little sibling rivalry,” I said, not missing the opportunity to trivialize her political challenges.

Ironically, unlike most other things I managed to lie in quick succession, it was actually the truth. If the information I managed to collect about the Imperial family was even half-accurate,

barring an intervention of the Eternals, it would take me less than a week to put her on her throne, considering her brothers had to ask for outside assistance despite the restrictions of her power.

The potential intervention of the Eternals, naturally, complicated any precision significantly. Clearly, I wouldn't have a hope of resisting the full might of the organization, but the same didn't apply if it was only an undercover operation.

And, considering their strategies against Janelor, I was willing to believe that the latter was the likelier option.

However, as I watched the princess shuffle in discomfort, trying to process my daring reveals, I decided to focus on the present.

We still had a lot to talk about.

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[Marianne - Level 21/29]

# Chapter Two Hundred Eleven

The silence stretched once more after my answer.

I let it linger, giving her the time to process that there was more than one mysterious organization that was interfering with the workings of her little Empire without showing the slightest respect to its supposedly-exalted nature.

“So, which organization do you belong to if not with them,” the princess said, doing her best not to give any information, but the great difference in our current skill configuration working against her.

The brute force approach was not just useful for combat but also for more political activities. My overwhelming speech and subterfuge allowed me to detect the undercurrents of the word ‘them’, loaded with hatred and fear, but no mystery.

It was clear that she was aware of the identity of the Eternals and their position in the world, at least to a certain degree in terms of their domination of the Material Plane. Whether her information included their dubious struggle against the gods was a mystery.

Yet, she avoided mentioning their name, clearly not intending to volunteer any information, no matter how small.

Interesting strategy.

Unfortunately for her, she was not the only one that could play that game. Rather than answering her question, I let out a soft, dismissive snort, which was all I needed to inform her that she was not worthy of questioning my origins.

I was happy to see that the first thing my reaction brought out of her was angry, even though she had managed to hide it behind the calm geniality that was cultivated by a lifetime of training. It meant that there was a fire to support her ambitions, the ambitions that forced her to fight against difficult odds rather than using her abilities to disappear.

A view that was enhanced by her improperly loose corset as she took a deep breath, enhancing her cleavage even further.

Yet, I felt a flicker of mana from her, one that was only possible as I was continuously observing her Soul Space. She pulled her mana to her Soul Space, letting it dance in her core before pushing outward, and started building her fake soul space once more.



I was impressed, both by her daring to create such an attempt against me, and by the subtlety of such an attempt. I might have missed it if it wasn't for my mana already lodged deep into her Soul Space, giving me real-time observation of what she was doing.

As the mana danced in her core, I watched as it transform. Mana was normally bright and filled with energy, but as it dragged in her Soul Space, it slowly lost its more noticeable qualities, turning almost invisible.

Between a shadow and a whisper.

It was a simple nature transformation, but watching it happen slowly rather than through a skill shortcut was interesting. Well, more accurately, it was through a different shortcut, as it was still much simpler than actually forcing such a transformation with the skill blocked.

The purity of it, however, looked even better than what could be achieved through the skills. Though I had no idea whether it was about her application method, or an illusion that was about the nature of the darkness mana.

Unfortunately, I lacked the ability to compare.

Yet, while both the process and the results were interesting, I couldn't say the same for the flexibility of her application. Despite the impressiveness of the result as she slowly built up her fake soul space, her ability could best be defined as fumbling in the dark — I thought as I forced myself to hold my chuckle back at the unintended pun.

She wasn't incompetent, of course. But her actions showed she lacked my ability to look inward and analyze her own soul space at the same time, yet she was familiar enough to be clearly checked it before.

My best guess was that she had used her fake skills to maximize her detection capabilities to examine it, until she developed a method to fumble in the dark.

"How can I help you, then," she asked after half a minute of silence, trying to reframe the situation once again. Extending unrestricted favors to strange men was hardly the smartest strategy, but still, it was a reasonable attempt for her to understand my objectives.

Especially since my barging implied that she couldn't exactly reject me if I pushed.

"Ah, the arrogance of the nobles. Do you think there's anything you can do that I would actually care about?" I said, followed by an extended sigh that made her tense, which made her focus

on the construction of her soul space even faster. Which was exactly what I wanted, as her speedy construction made the process even easier to decipher for me.

Just to extend the pressure a bit more, I removed my hood, though not before casting a spell to change my face, turning it into a generic man in his early fifties.

Though, even as I watched her fake soul space settle over her real one, obscuring the presence of the Darkness Spark — which was undiminished by the process, showing that Divine Spark was not an expandable resource like mana during the process — and her real soul space, and the fake skills started to appear.

Interesting, I thought as I took a note of the changes, including the expansion of her mana reservoirs, though the speed they filled was certainly underwhelming.

She lacked a perk similar to my Mana Regeneration. I wondered whether it was the lack of knowledge that was holding her back, or it was a limit to her faking ability.

While the process had been interesting, the same couldn't be said for the results. Her new fake level barely reached fifteen, which was hardly the greatest improvement, but that didn't mean it was a wasted effort. Her new skills were split between Speech and Subterfuge, and her stats shifted heavily into Charisma and Manipulation, giving her the ability to manipulate the conversation better.

Well, at least it would have if I didn't use the opportunity to throttle the effects of her skills and stats like I had done against Oeyne during our game.

The fun thing, since those skills and stats were much subtler than Strength and other physical stats, the princess didn't even realize that manipulation, still under the impression that she received the boost ability.

Leaving her overconfident in her new abilities.

To make things even more advantageous, pushing her into the perilous waters of overconfidence was just a side benefit. The real benefit was watching her create those fake skills, tricking the system.

The process was interesting, both easier and harder than I had expected. The first thing I noticed was the automatic nature of the process. She was the one that provided the mana to create the fake soul space and the skills, but she certainly lacked the ability to form the intricate nature of her skills, meaning that her rough control only created a seed for her skills, and the

System handled the rest.

No, I corrected it a moment later. Her mana didn't just use to create a seed, but also fed into the System, duplicating the effects of the experience, which clearly made it much harder for her to level up.

After all, leveling up had two fundamental aspects, the ever-growing experience requirement for higher levels, and — for the lack of a better term — the quality and the strength of the experience source, which led to the classification of beasts.

A fact that I had used my tantric skill to validate, confirming that a part of the soul space of the beasts had been devoured directly through the soul space of the slayer while most of it disappeared onto the air.

Of course, my knowledge about the system had been significantly limited at that time, and I had assumed the rest of whatever the beasts contained was dispersing back into nature. But, after the discoveries about how the System constantly absorbed the mana and divine spark all across the material plane, I had long realized that it was an inaccurate solution.

The system absorbed the Soul Space equivalent directly while a small portion was absorbed by the attacker, working more as a proof of achievement to record — hence the amount that was absorbed not exactly helping.

As far as I could see, her technique was using her Darkness mana to replicate the signature of monster kills, earning rapid reward from the System, creating her fake skills.

Or maybe, it was more accurate to define them as temporary skills, similar to my own perk-provided specialized ones. Still, their temporary nature came from the fact that they were created from her transformed mana, and required a constant feed of mana to maintain.

Which meant my earlier guesses about its usability were correct. The stronger the skills and higher the level, the more mana was required to sustain, putting a time limit. As far as I could see, she could use external mana — like the one that was stored in her complicated vase — to trigger her high level.

The same freedom didn't apply to maintaining. As its growth stabilized, the new Soul Space couldn't use its own fake reservoir or outside mana to support itself — though, based on my own tantric experience, I could see that it was mostly about her lack of ability to manipulate her own Soul Space rather than a theoretical restriction.

I was tempted to test that directly but I decided to leave that research project for a later date, giving myself more time to observe the princess first. I already had enough projects to deal with.

Still, that decision was unrelated to the chill that covered my insides.

Altogether, it was supposed to be a great discovery, but realizing the ease with the System could be manipulated by another Divine Spark actually scared me. Not because it meant Tantric was not unique in that aspect — a fact that I was already aware of — but because it only made me adjust my estimation about the Eternals.

Even if their control over the System was imperfect, how much power they could manage to gather after hundreds of dominance?

A tough question, though one that was best left another time.

I still had a tense, barely dressed princess to pay attention to. A barely dressed princess that was under the impression that she had just received a great boost to her Speech and Subterfuge to handle a dangerously political conversation...

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Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Twelve

“So, tell me, why do you think I’m here, wasting my time with you?” I said, letting amusement infect my tone as I did so, leaning against my chair even more to enjoy my comfort.

It was a subtle and efficient power move even under the conditions where I didn’t have a barely dressed princess in front of me, leaning back on the giant pillow.

As I looked at her beautiful visage, I knew that defining the moment as disappointing was certainly unfair — even though the presence of her corset covered more than I would have liked even in its loose state, making me wish for a more provocative set, maybe with more lace or simply less fabric.

The cream-colored corset she wore was stylistic, but it was certainly not chosen to maximize the attraction but comfort — reasonable, as she didn’t expect to interact with me at all. Luckily, she had amazing curves that showed through even that boring corset — and the fact that it was loose created a cleavage where there was supposed to be none.

She shuffled slightly, savvy enough to catch the subtle tone in my words as she looked at me, letting me enjoy her changing perception. I didn’t push the erotic undertone in my voice much, and just uttered it enough to give her an option, curious whether she would be as enthusiastic to weaponize it without the disguises and magical puppets.

The answer turned out to be negative. “You want to see whether I’m a risk toward Silver Spires and your coworker,” she guessed as she shuffled, carefully stepping away from the insinuation in a way she thought as subtle — only to be sabotaged by the restrictions on her abilities.

She seemed less willing to use seduction as a weapon without her tricks to give her a layer of plausible deniability.

Yet, even more amusingly, despite her ultimate preference, the decision didn’t come quickly. She lingered on the question for a while — a deliberation process that might as well be an open book with her compromised fake skills — influenced by her body captivated by arousal.

Amused by her struggle, I let her answer slide without pushing back. “Such arrogance,” I said with a chuckle. “To think that you can actually present a threat to our organization, even to a junior peripheral member,” I said, reinforcing the impression that we were stronger than she might have thought.

A risky approach, but I needed her to assume that I was a threat, to create leverage I could use to slowly convert her to my side. My need for her was less about her role as a princess — no matter how inconvenient a battle for the throne — and more about her potential knowledge about the Eternals and the intricacies of her abilities.

Of course, even those reasons were secondary compared to the real reason I needed her. I wanted to learn where she managed to find the Darkness Spark and where to find more Divine Spark — a fact that she must know considering the research project she funded.

I hoped that it wasn't just preparation to rob the Headmistress and something more.

"Then, what?" she asked.

"I was just curious about the naughty girl that dared to break into my coworker's office and try to suborn her loyal followers through fake magical puppets and disguises," I said, enjoying the way she tensed as her tricks unraveled more and more.

With the sole exception of her fake skills, giving her the impression that it was still secret.

It was never a good idea to push someone against a wall — metaphorically, of course, as it was quite fun when done literally.

"You have seen it, now what?" she asked.

"Now, I want to understand why a little faction of the Eternals is bothering to slowly dismantle your organization slowly rather than getting rid of you directly. Do you think they believe your little handmaiden trick?" I asked.

"They must have been," she said, her voice carrying no hint of surprise, which confirmed to me that she had a reasonably accurate idea about the strength of the Eternals as she didn't even react when I mentioned it was a little faction that was bothering her. "Otherwise, they would have just swooped down and got rid of me."

I nodded as I heard the honest conclusion in her tone, abandoning that direction. Of course, just because she thought that was the case didn't actually make it so, but talking with her about that was not exactly the most efficient way of exploring that.

"Good," I said dismissively. "So, since I'm here, let me leave you with some honest advice. Your actions in Silver Spires are amusing," I said as I stood up, took a couple steps toward the door, and started to disappear, using an illusion that looked like Teleportation from outside. Yet,

before delivering that, I turned to look at her one last time. “Make sure that amusement doesn’t evolve into irritation.”

The sudden stiffening in her posture showed that she received my message perfectly, the worry on her face implying that her initial plans weren’t as harmless to Silver Spires as I might have hoped.

It seemed that a visit from the mysterious stranger was still my best trick.

I expected to disappear after completing my objectives, only for that expectation to be ruined by the princess jumping up to her feet and panicked a moment later. “W-wait,” she shouted as she landed on her feet — an ill-advised move that further challenged the ability of her clothing to hide her beautiful assets as they reacted to the sudden movement.

I followed that request and dispelled the illusion — though not neglecting the pump of some mana in the room that was similar to what would remain after teleportation to make sure it looked genuine.

In acting, details were everything.

“Was that an order,” I said with chilly anger as I looked at her, and she took a fearful step behind, mistaking that for a genuine one.

“N-no!” she gasped in fear, only relaxing after my expression turned neutral. “I have an offer for your organization.”

“You’re wildly overestimating yourself if you think you have anything that would actually work in a bargain.”

“I...” she whispered before taking a deep breath. “I’m willing to give my full loyalty to your organization if you help me take the throne,” she said.

I chuckled. “As I said, you’re wildly overestimating yourself if you think we care about a little carcass of an Empire, let alone who is actually saddled with the pointless task of ruling it.”

Interestingly, her expression made me glad that I had interfered with the skills she hoped to use, because it meant that, when I saw a lack of reaction, I could be sure it was a genuine reaction rather than an elaborate trick.

“What if I offer something better in exchange for helping me to get the throne?”



This time, I fully turned toward her. “I have a feeling that you’re again overestimating the value of your trinkets, but go ahead,” I said, but just as she opened her mouth, I interrupted again. “But start dancing as you speak, so at least it won’t be a waste of my time.”

Her sudden hesitant expression was beautiful, especially after the effective seduction attempts she delivered when she was disguised as Delia. Maybe she was relying on the disguise of a clutch to separate herself from her actions.

She wouldn’t be the first girl I interacted with that did so, albeit hard to that degree.

“Are you—” she started, only to abandon that question when my expression stiffened, and she started swaying her body to an invisible song. Her body moved smoothly, showing that her training as a princess definitely included dancing — that, or she had learned to increase Delia’s power of attraction.

“Good,” I said as I let my gaze drag along her body, pushing a mild amusement to my face rather than arousal, which helped her to forget her shame, replacing that with impotent fury.

She didn’t let her annoyance stop her dancing. On the contrary, she started swaying faster and faster, her movements getting more and more fluid as she struggled to change my expression — her state on the edge once again helping to keep her on the edge.

“I have discovered some ruins belonging to the Eternals,” she explained. I said nothing even as she paused, struggling to hide my reaction. It was certainly valuable information, the kind that she could never voluntarily reveal under better circumstances. Revealing her biggest secret was a mistake.

Not that I blamed her for her mistake. Her fear, arousal, and shock worked wonders to block her decision-making, and her compromised fake skills just pushed it forward more.

The existence of ruins was not a surprise, as the ruined spear was the evidence of such a discovery, but I had been assuming that it was the extent of their discovery — and with everything going on, exploring the origin of the spear didn’t get any attention.

Considering her words, it was clearly a mistake. “And I’m interested in that, why?” I asked, hiding my reaction.

“Because its defensive wards are still standing even after centuries, and other than the outer perimeter, it’s untouched.”

“Interesting,” I said. “And is your Divine Spark also sourced from there?” I asked, only for her to freeze in shock while her fake soul space trembled as her control slipped.

“Y-yes,” she managed to stammer as her dancing stopped.

“Good, you might have earned some assistance,” I said before gathering my mana, using my teleportation perk to send some air into the Aether Dimension while I hid my presence with illusions, and left the room through the wards while the princess was distracted by my display.

[-1829 Mana]

I didn’t force her to tell me the location of the ruins, or promise help, because first, I needed to assess the risk.

Any ward that managed to survive despite the existence of the System, constantly devouring mana, was not something that could be tackled easily. And that was before factoring in the Eternals interfering.

After all, it was very likely that the only reason a faction of Eternals interfered with her was her knowledge about those ruins.

Risks all around..

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#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Thirteen

I didn't need to think for a long time about my next destination after I left the royal quarters, and turned toward the center of Silver Spires.

The target of my hurried steps was the office of the headmistress, who had been waiting for me for a long while.

However, my hurry had little to do with the patience she might have been feeling, despite the position she held or the magical power she commanded.

On the contrary, regardless of those factors, I had been planning to keep her waiting for some more. But, once again, I was forced to adjust my plans in light of the most recent information.

Which was something that I had been dealing with as a frustrating commonality.

It was the perils of trying to survive in a complicated world. Even as my power started to reach a point that encroached to a point that was supposed to intimidate others, I was discovering new heights to scale. I either needed to be flexible, or receive a painful lesson...

The latter was not exactly a fun option, so I adjusted my plans once more, sending a magical message to the headmistress once I arrived at the entrance of her tower.

Once again, the door opened once more, but this time, her office door was open rather than her living quarters.

After the short climb through the spiral stairs, I found her at her desk once more, working on a very thick pile of paper, one that was about the management of the school. She might be a hands-off manager of the school, but that didn't save her from the paperwork — especially since the latest undead troubles, teaching her that the number of people she could trust in her school was even less than she had assumed.

And while she clearly didn't care much about Silver Spires' general efficiency, she needed it to be still in working condition, at least if she wanted to still have her convenient concealment — one that clearly prevented the Eternals from meddling with that directly.

She was wearing her black robe, but her wings were out, which created a beautiful contrast. Though, it wasn't as interesting as the other contrast I could sense once I used my magical senses, dancing on her skin, the Darkness Spark from the ward occasionally getting free only to fly directly to her, like beautiful dark butterflies flying against her brightness.

Interesting reaction, I realized. It allowed me to see why she had to force herself to cleanse after every work day, although the reaction between the Light and Darkness Sparks was mysteriously confusing.

Though the flow of Darkness Spark was not a lot, and only at the center of the ward, it was a phenomenon that she needed to worry about. It was not something she could avoid, as the same interference allowed her to use her magic while avoiding self-immolation.

Trying to control an excessive amount of Divine Spark, especially one as volatile as the light spark, was a monumental challenge.

Luckily, she had me, her newest loyal servant, to help her!

“Sorry about that, she was picky about her food as expected,” I said, relying on her distaste against Janelor to keep the explanation short, which was all I needed to get a dismissive sigh.

She looked back with an annoyed expression that didn’t target me, showing that my excuse achieved its job excellently.

I expected her to stand up and lead me toward the upstairs, but instead, she just raised her hand and presented it to me. “Start working on creating storages under my skin,” she ordered, not bothering to remove her cloak, her tone sharp.

Too sharp, even, though the reason turned clear when I touched her hand, and a small blush spread to her face. For all her immense strength and authority, she was woefully inexperienced when it came to even the most innocent kind of physical contact.

A tempting detail, but after the latest discoveries about the princess, I reluctantly stayed focused on the mission even as I sent my mana into her body, one that had some tantric quality, but not to a degree that would make it noticeable for the headmistress.

[-691 Mana]

Luckily, the overwhelming yet straight nature of her mana helped immensely in that aspect, leaving her blind to my subtle tricks.

Most of the mana I had sent into her body went into building the storage I had promised her in the middle of her palm — something she trusted me to do after my success replicating the same feat in my own body — while a small portion went into her body, exploring the nature of the Divine Spark in her body.

It wasn't the first time I had the opportunity to assess her, but this attempt had several advantages. For one, she asked me to cast a spell in her body, which gave me an excuse for the obvious presence of mana in her body, allowing me to have a much better view than the fleeting glimpse I got earlier. Also, the extended study of the abilities of the princess gave me a baseline about how Divine Spark should be functioning without the assistance of the system — at least partially.

And, with that perspective, I gained a new appreciation of just how dangerous the headmistress' situation was.

The first, and the greatest, the difference was the nature of the divine spark. The Darkness Spark under the control of the princess was calm and obedient, soft enough that I had to stretch my detection capabilities to the limit even when she was using it.

The light spark under the headmistress' control — if we could call it that — was much more different. It was sharp and unruly, like a diamond with sharp edges, if the diamond could explode with the weakest accidental caress.

Yet, if the problem was limited to that, the headmistress wouldn't struggle to deal with it for years — likely enough years to be counted in centuries. All she needed to find was external storage to dump all of it outside, using physical storage similar to the ruined spear the princess made me use as a research project.

The next thing I noticed was a connection, this time only due to a combination of Tantric and Biomancy. The Light Spark in her body was connected to her life in a very intricate manner, deeply enough that I couldn't even imagine the consequences if she just tried to abandon it.

Or someone forcibly extracted it from her.

The scraps I managed to take off were nothing, of course, but the same didn't apply to the barely restrained bundle of light inside her, barely suppressed with all the focus she could put on the task.

And even then, it only succeeded because of her nature as an angel, and her mana was very similar to the Light Spark in the first place. Anyone else trying the same inefficient blunt force strategy would have exploded in seconds.

No wonder she was so enthusiastic about having storage in her, which would allow her to contain the Light Spark easier — which would finally allow her to act freely, maybe even to the point of finally leaving the oppressive wards she had been leaving for decades and centuries.

“Can you tell me about the differences between the chosen, demigods, and gods,” I asked even as I slowly worked on the storage. It was a good opportunity to have a more detailed explanation. “Is it just about the power and capabilities?”

Her gaze showed that she didn’t exactly appreciate the question. “Do you think it’s the time to talk about it?” she asked.

“Well, it might be relevant to the storage I’m creating, but if you feel that it’s irrelevant...” I said, not even bothering to finish my sentences.

After all, why should I after poking her greatest need.

“Yes and no,” she answered. “While, ultimately, each category has great difference in power, the kind that needs great numbers to surpass, it’s a reflection of their different natures rather than being measured in power.”

“And...” I said, prompting her to continue.

“It’s about how they handle Divine Spark in their bodies. Chosen, like Titania and you, could only contain a sliver of Divine Spark, and that spark had to be locked into a special form, crystallized. It could only be used as a spell focus, helping the caster to amplify the spell effects, but only after the spell is already formed, and nothing more.”

I nodded. Her explanation was more or less accurate for Titania, though the Companion Nodes, which technically qualified them as Tantric Chosen, was a different issue. In the past, I had assumed that it was limited to the achievements it brought, but the recent lack of Perks confirmed that it was not a rule, but another trick from the system, tempting me to create them for some reason.

I made a note to talk with Helga about experimenting with those aspects.

“Demigods are different. They have a more intimate connection with the Divine Spark, to the point of allowing some flexibility on how to handle its existence. It doesn’t have to stay locked as a crystallized node, instead staying in its free-flowing state, usually restricted to a portion of the body depending on the preferred method of usage. And even use it to transform the mana in different ways, increasing their magical and martial flexibility significantly while also empowering the impact.”

Interesting, I thought, wondering about my trick with the Divine Spark, melting it to empower my body qualified as such. After all, it did look conceptually similar. The princess, on the other

hand, was definitely on this stage, with her ability to create fake skills and extremely realistic puppets.

Of course, I doubted I would be able to find many demigods walking around with the System's ability to immediately devour the Divine Spark.

In that aspect, Darkness Spark was a great exception.

"And how about Gods?" I asked, as I realized the headmistress suddenly stayed silent.

Interestingly, the plight of the headmistress looked different from both explanations.

She took a deep breath rather than answering, confirming my suspicions...

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#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Fourteen

I didn't push the headmistress about the subject immediately, letting her handle the intense emotional rush it triggered for a long while before she started to answer.

"Gods are ... different," she murmured. "I don't know much about them much other than they are intensely linked to the Divine Spark. Some believe that they came from Divine Spark and conjure an existence later on," she said.

"Like their avatars, only on a larger scale," I suggested.

"Yes," she said, not even looking annoyed at the interruption. It was clearly a difficult subject for her to think about.

"Considering just how much Divine Spark you have already merged in your body, I'm going to take a wild guess and say you're not a believer of that theory."

"No, I'm not," she said. "At least not for the current generation of gods," she said, but I could feel her tensing even as she did so, giving all the signals that it was not something she wanted to talk about, but slipped out.

I believed it to be an accident. First, I saw her trying to deliberately mislead me, and it was certainly not a topic she was particularly competent at. And, as much as someone spilling a critical nugget of information like that sounded unbelievable, she lived in isolation for almost two centuries, with limited contact with anyone, always struggling to hide her true nature.

It was not particularly surprising that she accidentally blurted critical information while talking to someone that she thought she could trust.

And in a way, she wasn't wrong about trusting me. Not the way she thought, just following every little order of hers obediently, but actively solving her problems.

Of course, those might arrive in the form of some intimate activities she hadn't been expecting, but he doubted that she would complain about that once they started.

The others were very enthusiastic participants.

"So, you wanted to replicate their achievement by absorbing the Light Spark," I said, not focusing on that aspect. I might extract more about what different generations of gods meant if I pushed, but that would come in the form of putting her into a defensive pose.

Instead, I treated that as an inconsequential phrase, and focused on topics she was clearly more willing to talk about.

She just nodded, her expression proud yet desolate at the same time, showing that, while she was not proud of the situation she found herself in, struggling to survive, that didn't change the pride she felt at her decision.

Admittedly, she had a lot to be proud of. I had no idea of the circumstances that led her to find that much Divine Spark while she was under the control of the system, but I was willing to bet that it was a singular event, forcing her to take such a monumental risk.

Yet, not only she did do so, but also she managed to develop a genius way to balance it with Darkness Spark that not only kept her Light Spark under control but also allowed her to hide from the System.

I admired her, though that only tempted me more to finally grab her wings and pull them back while I took her from behind, testing her angelic cries to the limit.

I used the opportunity to focus on the more practical aspects of the plight, and leave the topic of other gods to another day. None of her answers taught me anything I didn't know from my own sneaky tests, but it was good to have an excuse for my knowledge.

"I think it's doable to help you contain divine spark more, especially when combined with the techniques that I managed to steal from ... her," I started, the slight pause leaving no doubt about what I was talking about, and her frustration told me the exact nature of her feeling. Then, I asked a question that would bring the discussion to one that I had been searching for.

"Do you have any theory about why my containment spells are working better on Divine Spark?" I asked.

"It must be about the elastic nature of your mana, coming from the Degenerate," she murmured dismissively. "It's a problem for the impact of the rest of your spells, but coincidentally, it helps our circumstances."

I barely held back laughter at the ease she dismissed the solution, her tone reminding me of the nobles talking about their servants. It was not insulting, at least not deliberately, but there was a casual attitude in her dismissal, the absolute confidence in the assessment.

Whether that underestimation was earned or not, it was a different subject.

“Who exactly is this degenerate?” I asked.

“No one really important,” she said dismissively.

“As you can imagine, it’s not entirely true for my case,” I said, yet deliberately not mentioning why she needed to care about the Degenerate more in her condition. Her underestimation worked perfectly for my aim to hide the true capability of Tantric.

She seemed disinterested in spending time on that while she had bigger issues to focus on, but catching my determined gaze, she actually broke her habit of not speaking more than a few words and actually started talking.

“First, you need to understand, despite the power the name implies, not all gods are the same. There are strong gods, and there are weak gods. Then, there are bottom feeders, the kind that only technically counted as gods due to their nature of power depending on Divine Spark.”

“Is this about the nature of the Divine Spark, or just something about the user?”

“Both,” she answered, though not looking particularly happy with my interruption. “There’s a reason that Divine Spark is the greatest treasure of the gods, the kind that they are willing to destroy entire planes to get a Spark of correct nature. It’s the reason that, for most of the concept, there’s only one God.”

“Because they fight until the strong devour the weak,” I guessed, earning a nod.

“Exactly,” she answered. “The power and the potential Divine Spark represents is simply makes impossible for a rival god of same nature to appear.”

“And, I’m guessing that’s the reason about the origin,” I interrupted. “After all, fewer rivals would appear if they were unaware of the possibility in the first place.”

“Yes,” she answered, but the angry glare on her cute face showed she didn’t exactly appreciate my growing interruptions.

Too bad for her that I had no intention of stopping. “And, how about the nature of the Divine Spark, how does it factor in.”

“That’s more complicated,” she answered, her voice trembling just enough to display her lack of confidence in her statement. Not that I was surprised. Divine Spark didn’t seem like a topic that a lot of notes lying around, and I doubted the people that knew about it would be simply

sharing their findings.

Especially the gods who relied on their Spark for supremacy.

“How complicated?” I still asked, probing her more about the subject.

“It’s possible to talk about tiers between divine spark, but that’s usually about the range of the domain and the way it could be applied. Some, like Light and Darkness, restrict each other, and it’s hard to argue which is stronger than the other. Some, like Storm and Chaos, cover aspects similar enough to imply a hierarchical relationship. And there are some Divine Natures that are simply worthless...”

“And I’m guessing Degenerate is one of them,” I commented, only to receive a nod.

She left me with an interesting question. I wondered whether the Degenerate she was talking about actually used Tantric, or used something similar that she was mistaking. Not that it mattered much, as her theories didn’t include many facts. They were barely enough to provide a starting point.

“How about the four cardinal elements, fire, water, earth, and air,” I asked. “Where those four lie in comparison.”

“That’s the domain of elemental lords, and it’s best left untouched, especially when compared to Gods,” she answered, quick to squash that aspect. And seeing her fear, I decided not to push the situation too much. “As a mage, you can use it, but never in a location that can actually contact with Primordial Aether without the protection of the Planar Shadow.

I still remembered Aviada’s disappearance, and the elemental monsters followed it, making clear that it was something that was best left untouched.

“I understand,” I said as I looked at her. “Thanks for the explanation. Now, I feel much more confident in containing Divine Spark. Are you ready?”

She nodded, and I raised my hand toward her...

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#### SKILLS

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Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Fifteen

“Be careful,” she murmured as I grabbed her hand. Her voice was steady, but it was impossible for her to hide her tenseness from me successfully.

“Don’t worry, boss,” I said, putting enough focus on the last word, enough to make it a mocking statement. Any other time, she would have reacted that badly, but this time, she didn’t even notice that, her attention on my fingers.

It was not hard to understand her. I was yet to learn the full details, but it was clear that she had spent a considerable portion of the last two centuries locked in the tower, and even the possibility of getting free from that was not so inconsiderable.

I was careful as I used Tantric to slowly imbue Arcana energy in a manner subtle enough that she wouldn’t notice, and started building a temporary container in her finger, paying attention to do so extra stable.

I considered deliberately failing a couple times before succeeding to further undersell my abilities. I would have probably done so without the presence of the princess and Janelor, their presence giving me a sense of pressure.

Both were enemies of the Eternals to a certain degree, though even without them, it was clear that the Eternals weren’t exactly a friendly organization, evidenced by the way they tried to use Zokras to take the school down.

After I completed it, she started circling her mana, once again using her clumsy mana flow to store Divine Spark into the storage, not too different from the way she used to create my Light node.

I would have been annoyed, if it didn’t give me even more chance to steal Divine Spark.

Most of the Divine Spark I stole, I just pushed into my body, cleansing through Tantric before letting my body absorb it — since the effectiveness of it helping me to level up getting lower and lower, I decided to prioritize absorption over letting the System devour it.

The next time, I would try to steal some from the Princess, to see whether the difference in Divine Spark would help.

The process took a long, and the waiting after that took even longer, so I decided to leverage the pause for something productive. I already had my mana inside her, and she was



conveniently distracted to examine the performance of the storage I created.

Perfect time for some experimentation.

I started to examine the relationship between the Divine Spark and her body, to see why she was failing to absorb it.

As I carefully examined her state, I soon realized that was not entirely correct. The best way to describe her status was halfway successful — as otherwise, she would have long died due to side effects regardless of the impact.

Though, the deeper I dug, the more I respected her solution. The simplest way to describe her trick was to create a giant Light Node for herself, compressing most of the Light Spark into an immobile mess, allowing her to survive despite a half-complete process.

Of course, the actuality wasn't as simple, as the Divine Spark was clearly resisting being compressed to such a degree, so she couldn't just compress the Spark completely and continue to use her mana.

She had to maintain a subtle balance of letting it liquify to get rid of the pressure, circling through her body before solidifying it into a node once more — while using Darkness Spark to suppress the process.

All the while, the way she had used the spark was diametrically opposed to mine, as even halfway successful, it was clear that she wanted to let it dance in her body freely. My trick was far more similar to Janelor's trick, though using transformed Divine Spark rather than Mana.

I didn't attempt to steal the Darkness Spark, as unlike the abundance of Light Spark she was suffering, she clearly had much less, enough that the disappearance of it might actually be successful.

Curious, I created a very small probe of pure mana, one that displayed the full capability of Tantric Node.

As I did so, I could feel my competency in Tantric rising, but I received no notification from the System, the partial block working excellently.

[-14 Mana]

The transformation itself might be complete, but the amount of mana was small enough to

avoid her attention, especially with the presence of the other, and I watched the process as it moved through her body.

It didn't take long for me to notice something very important. It occasionally collided with slivers of Light Spark, only for them to disappear almost immediately. At first, it made me frown, as while Tantric was able to purify the Divine Spark, it was certainly not an instantaneous process, not even for a sliver.

I turned my full focus into the process. I realized what was going on at the fifth occurrence.

Before I could absorb Light Divine Spark, I needed to purify it completely, stripping it of its nature — or transforming it into Tantric nature, but that was not a question I was yet to answer — before my body could accept it.

Yet, the same didn't apply to the headmistress, who was already halfway merged with Light Spark, with their nature mostly aligned. A simple touch of Tantric effect was enough to soften the rigidity of the Divine Spark, which then allowed it to merge with her properly.

As it merged with her, I understood why she was having trouble describing the interaction between Divine Spark and the gods. It directly merged into her body just like my featureless Divine Spark did, but unlike my featureless one, it also imposed its nature on the Headmistress, enhancing the nature of her light more.

It was a subtle change, impossible to notice if I hadn't been looking for it deliberately, but impressive nonetheless. I couldn't imagine how it would look once it was completed fully.

The best part, since it would fully merge with her, it would be protected from the absorption of the system as well.

I smiled at the process. I was certainly afraid of showing my ability to purify Divine Spark even with our growing relationship. But giving that little, almost indiscernible push to complete her half-completed merging was much less spectacular.

One that could be easily dismissed as a coincidence, just like she did the ability of the storage I created to hold Divine Spark.

Being underestimated was certainly useful.

There was no time like now, I decided as I tightened my hold over her hand, and pressed my finger to her palm, slowly infusing light energy that was infused with Tantric as I caressed her

palm.

I barely held a chuckle as I used the extremely destructive light energy as a massaging aid. It was not necessary to do so. On the contrary, using healing energy or pure mana would have been more useful, and easier.

Using the destructive and aggressive nature of the Light mana as a massage aid, on the other hand, was considerably challenging. Even with my stats and magical competence, I doubted I could have achieved without Tantric's assistance, which was, for the lack of a better term, softening the Light, making it gentler and more obedient.

"What are you doing?" the headmistress asked, quick to question as she looked at me, though it took a moment for her to react as she was still distracted by the monumental nature of my earlier achievement.

"Helping to fight against tenseness, just in case the storage somehow blocks your mana flow," I said. "Why, is it not working?"

"That's not what —" she started, only for her eyes to widen, as she doubtlessly noticed a sliver being absorbed in her body. Her shock was palpable enough that even she had no hope of hiding, so I reacted.

"Should I stop?" I asked as I slowly pulled back my mana.

"No!" she gasped, making by far the loudest voice I heard her making, not that I begrudged her for it. After all, what just happened represented a solution that plagued her for centuries.

"Are you sure?" I asked, acting shocked at her sudden reaction. "You don't have to lie to protect my feelings, I can handle it," I said, letting my smile widen.

"I'm s-sure, continue," she said, her face blushing in excitement, her breathing fast, once again highlighting just how cute her flawless face could be while showing emotions.

"Why did you react that way, then?" I asked, enjoying pushing her once again.

"I..." she muttered a bit, lost at the moment as she tried to find an excuse for her explosive reaction. "I was just surprised at your competency at manipulating Light. It's a harsh element, yet you're able to manipulate it other than a destructive force. That's impressive."

"Really??" I asked.

“Oh, yeah,” she said, jumping at the opportunity to change the topic. “It’s a great performance for a human that’s not even a demigod to show that kind of flexibility while using Light. The nature of the light is not a simple destructive force, but it was rare for a mere Chosen to manipulate it like that, using it as a soothing force. Even a demigod might have trouble with it.”

“Well, I can’t take all the credit, I’m applying some of the tricks I learned from Janelor,” I said, more than happy to give her a viable direction for her suspicions. It was for the better if she thought a combination of my mana manipulation abilities and the secret techniques of a dragon was responsible for it.

“Good, that pile of scales is finally earning her keep,” she murmured, her animosity showing even with the elation she was feeling. “Now, continue,” she said.

I slowly massaged her hand for a long while, letting my Light-natured mana invade her body more and more, using the opportunity to understand the unique nature of her body as well as the way her Light-natured body interacted with Light mana.

With such access, it didn’t take long for me to notice something specific in her body, one that was subtly changing the nature of her mana, making it more rigid than it needed to be.

Rigid enough to reject the merger of the Light Spark, responsible for extended failure.

It was clearly not a part of her true nature, but it wasn’t just some simple enchantment either. It was subtle, but woven into her nature subtly enough to be mistaken for one.

I wasn’t surprised by her not noticing it, because it was not only woven very subtly, but also it actually included a very subtle amount of Divine Spark, but it was used much more complicated manner than I ever thought possible.

The only reason I noticed that was as the Tantric energy infused her body, it flickered enough to earn my attention.

Just like that, the mystery deepened even more. Like I didn’t have enough questions to answer.

After some thinking, I decided to avoid that for a while. Instead, I stood up, catching her eye. “You’re still very tense,” I said. “Do you want me to work on your shoulders? It’ll be a bit exhausting for me magically, but you clearly need a proper massage.”

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#### COMPANIONS

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[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Sixteen

The expression of shock on her face as I made my offer was beautiful, especially since I didn't try to hide my aroused expression.

On the contrary, I made a deliberate effort on the other side, revealing a carefully-calibrated sense of arousal, enough for her to pick up.

There were several reasons for that. The first was to give her a simple way to control me, one that she expected me to show considering the disdain she showed toward this so-called Degenerate.

I also wanted to test how she would react to the implied suggestion once she received the solution to the problem that plagued her for centuries. Would that make her pull back to protect her purity? Would she overestimate the strength of her authority and try to order me to continue without changing anything?

It turned out that, even for a beautiful angel living in isolation, the temptation could get too much. I felt like a demon as her beautiful eyes glanced down accepting my offer wordless. Though the sudden movement of her wings, spreading to the side to allow my approach, was a rather more impressive display of her acceptance.

If it was another woman, I would have acted silly and teased her until I earned verbal acceptance, but I could see that for her, even that silent approval was pushing her limits. Just like my earlier touch to her hand showed, she was not exactly used to physical contact.

Despite what my naughty smile implied, I was rather conservative as I put my hands on her, slowly rubbing her shoulders as I infused her body with Tantric-infused Light mana, stretching my manipulation to the limit as I used the energies begging to be released as a destructive force as a gentle massage aid.

I radiated mana from across the whole surface of my hands, the process of absorption for her getting almost three times faster — and that was with her black robe, designed to block light mana.

Without that, the process would have been ten times the initial speed.

She didn't seem to notice that fact, lost in the speed of transformation. Of course, with the speed I was displaying, it would have taken a long time to actually allow her to absorb all those

Divine Spark.

Long enough to be measured in years if I worked on her full-time.

Yet, she didn't seem to be particularly torn-up about the speed, not that I blamed her. After all, she had been dealing with that problem for a very, very long time, making even a decade a good solution.

Especially since her only other hope was the employer of Janelor somehow solving her problem — and considering Janelor confirmed that to be impossible later on.

I could have mentioned to her about the robe blocking the touch, and I had no doubt it would succeed, but I decided to create a little trick, one that would force her to take initiative.

What was more fun than seducing a pure angel who was far too used to her power and authority?

Tempting her to seduce me instead.

And, the first step of my campaign was a subtle one. I just let my finger drag along her neck, five minutes after I started working on her beautiful body.

A momentary contact, one that could be written off as accidental even by the most suspicious mind. She tensed, but I was getting familiar enough with her physical reactions — with my experience, five minutes was enough to get an excellent read on her reactions, especially since she was accepting a steady stream of mana into her body, which significantly enhanced the accuracy of the information I was collecting.

She tensed, because just as my finger brushed against her neck, I intensified the mana flow slightly as well, making sure she didn't miss the sudden change in the impact.

As I went back to work on her shoulders, however, she said nothing. I might have assumed my initial ploy failed if it wasn't for her tenseness, showing her inner turmoil as her initial patience was destroyed.

It was good to see the greed slowly digging its fingers into her psyche. After all, a decade to recover was an amazing period to recover after two centuries, especially for an angel with phenomenal longevity.

Yet, greed was an interesting sin, one that even an angel was clearly not free of.



Not that I wasn't surprised. She wouldn't have tried to absorb that Divine Spark in a desperate gambit to become a Goddess, even risking death in the process.

Not that I blamed her. It was clearly a good strategy, one that only foiled because of the subtle Divine Spark-based enchantment, carefully integrated into her existence to prevent that merger — my best guess, though unsupported, the God of Light, adding that to his angels, preventing them from replicating his feat.

Greed was not instantaneous like lust, or unyielding like pride. It was soft and insidious, like an itch.

And, unfortunately for her, waiting for it to slowly trigger her impatience was simply too delicious to be ignored. I continued with a steady pace, determinedly avoiding her neck.

Even as she shuffled a couple of times, subtly trying to direct my touch. But with each failure, the insidious touch of greed showed its head more.

"You're not that bad when it comes to massaging," she commented offhandedly, trying to casually lead the discussion.

Too bad for her that it was as stealthy as an explosive spell designed to take down castles, and the fact that it came after fifteen minutes of silence made it even more obvious.

"Yeah, it's a fun way to help my allies relax after a long battle," I said, once again playing coy as I said so, but without letting a suggestive pride from infecting my tone.

"It shows," she said. It was a statement that was strictly against her personality, enough to make a big smile bloom on my face. Her voice still lacked arousal, of course. She was having trouble asking me to focus on her naked neck rather than her shoulder, which was already her limit.

Her current limit, at least.

I was quite enthusiastic about redefining those, but just as greed was a sin, patience was a virtue, one that I was determined to show under the circumstances.

It was the thematically-appropriate move to seduce an angel.

I continued my steady caresses, ignoring the obvious thread of conversation she was trying to convince me to pick, the change of pace certainly entertaining.

Though, she finally surrendered that attempt as I let my hands drag down to the middle of her

back. "M-maybe you should stay focused on my shoulders," she said, her voice hitching despite her best attempt to keep it steady. "M-maybe even climb up a bit more, focus on my neck."

"Of course," I said as I started working on her neck. "Although, I didn't know that angels also had trouble on their back due to that problem."

"That problem," she asked, sounding lost.

"You know, big breasts," I said, enjoying the sudden tenseness of her body.

"W-what do you mean," she stammered in shock. "I have no such problem."

"Oh, my mistake," I said, quick to accept her explanation, but she stayed tense for a moment. Just as she was starting to relax under my touch, I let my hands drag down to her shoulder once more. "Then, there's no point of focusing on your back so much," I said.

"N-no, continue!" she said rapidly. "That's better."

All she needed was to tell me that the massage was helping to solve her problem, and she could have openly requested me to focus on her neck without making it weird. But that would also mean revealing that she needed me even more than she revealed through the storage creation process, meaning she had to cede even more power to me.

And, she was clearly unwilling to do so.

Unaware that she was only putting herself in a more tenuous situation by doing so.

"If you wish so," I said, accepting her request, but using a tone that conveyed just how ridiculous I found her request. I brought both hands on her neck, letting my magic slowly infuse her skin and help her to fully merge with the Divine Spark.

As she did so, I was starting to get an even more accurate understanding of the merger process and what it included, and how wildly it differed from my process. At first, I had mistaken the process for simple absorption, but as the amount of Divine Spark under her full control increased, I could see that it was turning into a second layer of circulation, slowly spreading into her body, interacting with the free mana in her body in a surprising way.

Markedly more different than my blunt way of using Divine Spark, though I had no idea whether it was an option for purified Divine Spark in the first place.

Luckily, I had the opportunity to experiment properly.

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#### PERKS

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Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

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[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Seventeen

For the next ten minutes, I continued massaging her neck steadily.

Soon, her squirming stopped being only about her excitement about the potential implications of the process, saving her from the plight she had been struggling for a long, long time, and started being about the subtle yet effective betrayal of her own body.

I was not half-bad at giving massages, and the fact that she asked me to massage her neck made things even easier. There was no mystery about her decision. I needed touch to a naked part of her body to make the massage effective due to the special blocking nature of her robe, and the neck seemed innocent enough.

The key aspect, 'seeming' innocent.

Unfortunately for her, that choice betrayed her inexperience more than anything else, as the neck could be a surprisingly interesting location to focus on during foreplay.

Kissing and licking would have been much more effective, especially when interrupted by a few nibbles that left a lingering mark on her flawless skin, but my expert touch was still enough to awaken some of the instincts buried deep in her body.

Very slowly, of course, as the centuries that passed without a touch while combined with the emotional oppression of the Light node left those instincts buried deep, requiring a careful excavation.

Though, the emotional oppression of the light was certainly not as intense as Titania had been suffering due to her node. I didn't know whether it was partly due to the headmistress' natural light nature balancing the effect of the Light Spark, the constant exposure to the Darkness spark limiting its emotional suppression effect.

Or simply the fact that the construction method of the Light node was crude enough to trigger such an effect.

I could imagine a few experiments to test that aspect, but ultimately, I decided against it, instead focusing on the slow transformation of her Divine Spark, trying to understand the nature of the mysterious merger while I slowly awakened her latent desires.

She just accepted my massage, unaware of the danger it represented.

Another ten minutes passed before I pulled my next trick. I used my biomancy subtly to pull another trick, allowing it to build up a slow resistance at the area that I was touching, one that would dissipate in a few hours, so, all she needed was to ask for a break before letting me continue.

Or, ask me to touch somewhere else.

“We should pause,” I said, wanting to bring her attention to that fact. “The constant exposure of mana would awaken a natural resistance and reduce the effectiveness of the massage,” I said.

“Right now?” she said.

“I can always continue tomorrow,” I said, exaggerating the duration of the effect a bit, and she paused, her tenseness revealing what she had been thinking was rather important.

Of course, that resistance effect was barely more than a gimmick, one that she could display with a targeted flare, but that was under the assumption that she had noticed it. And, lost in the monumental nature of the situation, she didn’t even think about a deliberate trick, still operating under the assumption that I had no idea about the true effect of the massage.

The fight between her sense of propriety and her desire to finally get rid of her dangerous plight was obvious, especially with the nature of the simplest solution I left available to her.

“Maybe you should focus on my shoulders a bit,” she murmured.

Greed was taking hold of her beautiful heart.

“As you wish, boss,” I said, not bothering to hide the fascinated tone in my voice as she slid her robe a bit, enough to reveal her naked shoulders, beautiful enough to represent perfection.

I had seen her naked before, of course, but watching her slowly slip her robe enough to reveal her shoulders was even more beautiful.

Though, the fact that she had missed the easiest solution while she was busy dealing with the shock of the moment made the situation even more incredible. Her robe was creating an impediment, because it was designed to actually absorb her natural aura, therefore impeding my massage as well.

All she needed was to change into an ordinary robe, and it would allow the effect to occur without a problem. Yet, while I never doubted her intelligence — as the solution she developed

to suppress her Light Spark with Darkness Spark was simply genius — but nothing that I saw about her showed quickness to solve ordinary problems.

How amusing.

I let my hands land on her naked shoulders, repeating the same effect, using the benefits of increased access for my benefit. “Actually, there’s a way to enhance the effects even more,” I said, and before she could even answer, I used Biomancy to conjure some massage oil, one that worked wonders to enhance the intensity of my touch.

She bit her lips as she turned toward me, her face contorted in shock, but that was the limit of her reaction, because the oil also increased the effect of the light trick I was using.

Well, at least, that was what I was making it look like. I just increased the Tantric effect of the light a bit more, making it look like the conjured oil was helping to further focus the effect.

It only worked to increase the arousal she was feeling from my touch. My fingers danced between her neck and shoulders, occasionally even sliding forward enough to caress her collarbones.

The peak of my victory was a singular purr, barely audible, when I first touched her collarbone, the surprising rush of pleasure enough to break her determination to hide the effects.

Yet, that didn’t make her stop the process, not even ask me to slow down, even as the same resistance started to appear on her shoulders, significantly restricting the impact.

I could slowly feel her growing confusion, battling with the unfamiliar presence of pleasure, combined with her desire to ask me to undress her even further.

As always, I decided to be my usual helpful self and took the initiative to help her resolve her emotional conflict.

I gently grabbed her right arm, and started massaging her by slowly rubbing her hand, my fingers dancing on her naked skin as I slowly climbed up, revealing her delicate forearm, the dance of my fingers giving her a reprieve from the earlier rush.

For a given value, of course, as while her arm was certainly not as sensitive as her neck and shoulders, it was not without its own benefits as well. As my oil-covered fingers danced back and forth on her skin in a rhythmic pattern, her helpless squirms didn’t take long to return.

A sensation that increased even more as I rolled her sleeves and started caressing her upper arm, enjoying the beautiful contrast of her flawless skin and the hard muscles underneath.

Suggesting her preference for armor was not just a stylistic choice. Maybe one day I could ask her for a melee duel for some entertainment.

Ideally, one that would be followed by something even more entertaining.

Soon, I finished working on her arms, and returned to her shoulder, but not before fixing her arms. That helped her to calm down, which was a mistake, because the only reason I pushed her sleeves down was that, with them bunched, it would be much harder to push her robe down.

Then, I returned to her shoulder, once again intensifying the pleasure she was feeling. She stayed silent. Her only reaction was a twitch of her beautiful white wings while I resumed caressing the earlier areas.

But this time, that was not my limited starting point. My fingers started slipping lower and lower on her back. First, I danced on the edge created by her rolled robe, but that was just a start. With each repeat, I pushed her robe lower, until it was restricted by the little openings that she used to let her wings stay out.

Her deliberate silence as I pushed her robe was beautiful, but that was destroyed the moment I touched her wings.

“No!” she gasped in shock as she moved forward reflexively, though I didn’t miss the infection of her tone. It was a tone of desire, one that only happened when touching a particularly sensitive spot.

The sensitivity of her wings was shockingly interesting.

Yet, considering the nature of her tone was not the only thing I had done as she reflexively moved forward. If there was one advantage how high stats, was the enhanced reflexes it provided.

Those reflexes allowed me to grab her robe as she moved forward, and I pulled back. If that happened between two ordinary people, the worst that would happen was to turn a painful tug.

But between someone with my stats, and a supernatural being that was further enhanced by her incredible power, she magically enhanced robe didn’t have the slightest change, and ripped



with a spectacular sound, not only leaving her back naked, but also forcing her to grab the front to prevent a spectacular cleavage from appearing.

“You need to be more careful,” I said in admonishment even as I pressed my hands on her back once again, this time pushing her forward, my fingers dancing along her spine as she found herself lying against her desk.

“But, since the accident already happened,” I added, not bothering to hide the huskiness of my tone.

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[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Eighteen

The headmistress was busy processing her shock as she found herself against her desk, while I let my fingers dance along her spine, changing the undercurrent of the massage significantly.

Yet, her silence was not just about the sudden change the situation showed, starting with her accidental flinch, but also the intensity of the mana flow, doubling in impact as I increased the amount of skin connection as I also let my forearms brush, with a corresponding increase in the mana flow.

I also thought about increasing the effectiveness of the process, but I had to ignore that part despite its fun potential. It would be a pity to do so after I went all that trouble to disassociate the process from my Tantric — or from her perspective, the Degenerate's powers.

And, increasing the effectiveness through arousal was the best way to resurrect that point.

Instead, I enticed her silence with a simpler equation. The more skin contact, the more effective the massage...

And faster the process.

"I hope you're not unhappy with the pressure from my elbows," I explained with a chuckle. "But the constant flow through my hands was getting unsustainable, but since you clearly didn't want to stop..." I added, adding a mocking tone at the last part.

This time, she didn't miss the sexual implication in my words and my tone — which was impossible even for her after she was pushed against her desk, still trying to keep her ripped robe in place with her hands, too distracted to even try to use her magic — but that didn't change her silence.

Once again, her greed worked wonders to add some more confusion to the challenge she was facing, forcing her to consider things she would never have considered otherwise.

And, the arousal she felt more and more intensely as my fingers danced along her spine, adding more ingredients to the confusing elation she was feeling after finding a solution to the problem that plagued her for a time long enough that I struggled to comprehend.

"I can stop if you're unhappy with the service," I prompted.

Her silence was telling. Soon, her tenseness disappeared as she leaned against the desk more,

accepting my reckless overreach, making me wonder just how much she would accept.

And, with her mind plagued by the shock of my achievement, it was the perfect time to test that. My forearms and hands alternated against her naked back, increasing the intensity of mana flow more and more to increase her enjoyment.

It was reckless, certainly, but her silent acceptance and the sight of her trembling wings were impossible to resist, especially after I kept away from her for so long, afraid of the mysteries that were hidden behind her facade.

The state of those mysteries was not that different from the state of her body. While they were not completely revealed, I managed to rip through the curtains enough to give a tantalizing view of what was hidden underneath, with curves hinting more.

I certainly made riskier decisions than I had been doing at the moment.

That didn't mean I recklessly charged forward to rip the remaining veil — which applied both the metaphorical existence that hid her secrets, and the literal existence that hid her 'secrets'. Instead, I let my fingers dance freely over her beautiful back, each moment bringing her to a new height of pleasure.

A pleasure that she was reacting badly enough to make me doubt the frequency she was applying any self-care method.

What a great horror.

I let my thumbs climb back to her neck, pressing softly for a fleeting moment before dragging them back down along her spine, leaving a lingering warmth that triggered her pleasure even more.

The trembling of her beautiful wings turned into a roadmap for me, giving me a shortcut to reading her reactions as unlike her voice, she made no attempt to contain their trembling and occasional tensing.

She didn't stay silent forever. "Careful," she warned as I dragged dangerously close to her breasts, though that warning would have been more effective if a moan used that as an opportunity to escape from her beautiful lips, echoing against the walls.

"As you wish, boss," I said mockingly as I repeated the move deliberately, this time getting even closer, confident that the shame of that slip would be enough to keep her silent as I did so.

I was correct, as I repeated the move several times, she stayed silent, even when my fingers slipped under her robe to brush against the side of her breast momentarily, though I could feel her preparing to warn me again if I repeated that.

So, instead, I pulled back after that touch, leaving her with her aborted intent and the flicker of pleasure.

The resulting tremble of her wings was simply beautiful.

I returned to the task of caressing her back once more, the intense flow of mana getting even more intense, enough to make me question my magical strength.

[-683 Mana]

Luckily, she had other concerns than keeping a tab on the amount of mana I spent, like trying to deal with the unfamiliar touch of pleasure. I focused on her back a few more minutes before making another pass near her breasts, the pleasure delaying her prepared response sufficiently to make it obsolete once more.

Though, she could have warned me regardless, but I wasn't unfamiliar enough with the female body to miss the signs of a held-back moan.

"Tell me if you feel uncomfortable," I said, using her momentary silence as a chance to enhance the pleasure she was feeling even more by pushing the limits, though this time, vertically rather than horizontally.

My fingers drifted down to the small of her back, a location that was arguably less obscene than the sides of her breasts, which was enough to keep her lips silent once more as the special mixture of my mana invaded her body and helped her Divine Spark to transform more and more.

I might have limited our first massage experience to that, if it wasn't for a sudden tremble that exploded all along her body intensely, along with a swarm of moans that was louder and more intense than I had expected.

"Wow, you're certainly loud," I said, unable to keep the mocking statement off my lips as her cries exploded without restriction.

"W-what's going on?" she muttered softly, showing that, despite all her power, she was tethering on the edge of unconsciousness.

“You’re having an orgasm. It can’t be that long ago you have forgotten how it felt, right?” I said as I leaned down to catch her gaze, only to see that along with the invasion of pleasure, there was a shock, its deepness surprising me.

“Of course, that assumes you have orgasmed before,” I added, her reaction confirming that while she was familiar with the concept, she had no first-hand experience with it. “Oh,” I said, unable to keep my chuckle in. “No wonder you’re so surly all the time,” I said.

That earned an angry glare, one that would have been followed by a much more intense reaction if she actually had the strength to move, or could give her lips any order other than the endless moans that exploded off her beautiful lips.

“Come on, boss, you can’t still think that it’s not a tragedy, living that long without experiencing one of the greatest pleasures of life,” I commented, and she trembled. “But you’re clearly not in the mood of walking. Let me help you to your bedroom,” I added as I grabbed her in a bridal hold, and started walking out of her office.

“L-let me go,” she stammered.

“As you wish,” I said, only for her legs to tremble badly the moment I let her connect with the floor. Reflexively, she grabbed my shoulders. Her body was still trembling with the effects of her first orgasm, enough to make it impossible for her to actually stand on her feet. “Do you want me to let you go?” I said.

The glance she threw at me, anger battling with arousal made her look the cutest I had ever seen, though that was not without sexiness, as her inattentiveness allowed her robe to slide down, creating a crude cleavage — crude as in the shape of it, as it was certainly not a comment about the celestial beauty of her breasts.

“Did you change your mind?” I asked, unable to suppress my desire to tease her. She decided that being carried was less humiliating than collapsing.

I chuckled as I lifted her to a bridal hold once more, enjoying the way she trembled in my arms, with no signs of subsiding anytime soon, suggesting that, without her supernatural endurance, she might have fallen unconscious — which would have been a great pity.

Though, just because she didn’t fall unconscious didn’t mean she was unaffected by her pleasure — above and beyond the obvious physical impact. For example, she missed the very obvious implication of being carried into her bedroom after an orgasm...

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Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]



## Chapter Two Hundred Nineteen

The headmistress said nothing as we climbed the spiral stairs. As I did so, I couldn't help but compare the amusement I was feeling with the tenseness I did as I climbed for the first time, expecting to meet an undead monstrosity under her cloak, unaware of the extent of her deception.

Yet, as I carried her upstairs in a bridal hold, her beautiful wings twitching as she tried to keep them collected to avoid hitting the walls, only to fail repeatedly, showing that her legs weren't the only part of her body that she was having trouble controlling.

"Wow, this place is very different when you're not expecting any guests," I said, mentioning the noticeable absence of the crystal pillars that helped her to channel her mana. Instead, the room was in the same configuration I had observed when I first stumbled.

She blushed at the comment as I glanced around like it was the first time I was seeing this layout.

A wooden bed with a thin cot that even a servant would turn their nose to, a similarly shoddy wooden wardrobe, the crystal platform in the middle.

And the bath in the corner, one that she used to cleanse herself and reabsorb the Darkness Spark — which moved much more obediently than the Light Spark, enough to be cleansed by the ward before getting absorbed by the ward.

The bath might be a critical component of the balance she had been maintaining for a long time, but I was in the process of solving that problem, which meant that it was time to explore alternative usage methods of the bath.

"Let's see if we can use your light-infused bath water to enhance the impact of the massage," I said. A thoughtful expression appeared on her face rather than the panic I was expecting, suggesting that, she actually took it as an actual input rather than just a teasing remark I used before I undressed her.

But then, I corrected, why shouldn't she. I had done everything I could do to obscure the link between Tantric and her transformation, shifting attention to my relatively elegant way of leveraging Light mana.

And if that had been correct, the bath would certainly enhance my capabilities significantly, by

allowing me to infuse mana all over her body without the need for a direct touch.

I wondered whether it was more of her naivety or her newfound greed in play as she missed the most obvious reaction behind her situation, but I was sure that, regardless of the reason, the pleasure that blanketed her mind played a big role in her omission.

That omission didn't survive for long as I let her step down in front of the bath, one of my hands on her shoulder, stabilizing her.

The other grabbed her robe, and after one harsh pull, ripped it completely. "Wow, you really don't like wearing anything underneath that robe, do you?" I muttered as I enjoyed the beautiful sight of her flawless body from behind, her heart-shaped ass on display without any pesky interruption, the soft shine of her wings just adding another shadow to the state.

"W-what are you doing?" she gasped as her wings moved to cover her ass, with them lowered, I was able to get an amazing view of her breasts, large enough to easily spill out of my hands, yet just as perfect and firm.

"No bra as well, very naughty," I commented cheekily, which earned a beautiful gasp as her hands jumped up to cover her breasts. Unfortunately, they were much less adequate coverage, her small hands leaving most of her flesh free for my enjoyment.

I couldn't help but chuckle at her ineffective attempts of covering her body even as I gave her a gentle push, allowing her to step into the bath.

I followed her, but not before matching her in the state of dressing, but she was too occupied by her own nudity to notice that before I stepped into the bath after her, and hugged her behind.

Her wings were between our bodies, but considering the sensitivity she had displayed, it was hardly something that reduced the impact of the hug for her, and even if it did, my hands were on her naked belly, caressing softly.

"So, are you ready for the real massage," I whispered.

She whimpered in shock at my daring, but, just to make things fun, that whimper didn't survive for long.

The reason, as I cast another biomancy spell, this time pulling some of her bath water to fly, covering our bodies with a thin layer of water. It didn't work to erase the traces of darkness from her since she wasn't channeling her magic. Instead, I used it as a kind of focus to further

intensify the flood of light magic.

Of course, it was just an excuse to slightly increase the effectiveness of Tantric, further tripling the speed of the process, bringing the required time to complete the process from years to months — assuming constant dedication, of course.

And, just like that her greed, aligned with the unfamiliar touch of pleasure, worked wonders to destroy her complaints, once again making her fall silent.

“Let’s start by focusing your back, move your wings,” I whispered into her ear, this time my voice reflecting my arousal without the slightest attempt of concealment.

She didn’t follow that request, but considering she made no attempt to move forward to separate herself from my naked touch, it was less of disobedience and more of indecision. “Or, I can start from the other side,” I whispered into her ear, my lips close enough for my breath to caress her skin.

I had been planning to let my lips linger down her cheek before focusing on her neck, kissing and nibbling cutely to push things further, but she managed to thwart that insidious plan with a very clever solution...

Near-instant obedience.

Before I could even lean down to place the first kiss on her cheek, her wings moved, freeing her body from the protection of her wings. “Good girl,” I said as I pushed my hands through her wings, caressing her feathers softly.

It might be the single most conflicting yet comforting feeling I had ever experienced. The light mana invaded my body as I touched her wings, almost instinctively, her mana dancing with mine, giving an ethereal feeling to my touch.

Of course, I could feel that there were two reasons for that reaction. The first was her aroused state, one that was flailing her control. And the second was the current nature of my mana, a soft variant of light, almost wrapping around herself.

“N-not my wings,” she whispered, needy, but this time, it wasn’t just panic that I was hearing in her voice but a carnal tremble, one that reflected need, showing it wasn’t just simple sensitivity.

“As you wish,” I said, but only pulled one of my hands from her wings, and used that to put her belly.

“Y-you were supposed to work on my back,” she whispered.

“Oh, I am,” I said as I used my hold to pull her tighter against me, one that buried my shaft between her beautiful ass cheeks. Surprisingly, she reacted less than to my continuing caressing of her wings, whimpering helplessly.

It was not fair for her to be the only one enjoying it, I decided as I started moving up and down, using my muscular chest as a tool of massage.

Of course, that amazing work was shadowed by the impact of my shaft moving up and down in the beautiful valley created by her perfect ass...

But one couldn't get anything.

At that moment, there was nothing preventing me from pushing forward. Well, nothing but her delicious whimpers and her lack of complaint, showed that she was not too far away from acceptance in the first place.

Ironically, that just tempted me to tease her more. I took a step forward, pushing her with my body until she found herself pinned against the wall, while I moved up and down repeatedly.

The constant flow of light mana under the guise of massage, slowly helping her to properly merge with the Light Spark, worked wonders.

Though, as the process continued, I could see the difference between my process and hers even more.

After the slight softening, the nature of the Divine Spark was aligning perfectly with hers, slowly taking shape over her body, the subtlest shadow that even she would have trouble noticing. But still, it was almost independent of her, but aligned at the same time.

Maybe that was how the avatars of the gods worked.

In comparison, I could see the way I used Divine Spark definitely butchered any potential of leveraging that.

Because, I could feel that, the only reason she was able to achieve that was the extreme alignment she had with the nature of the Divine Spark — and while I had little idea about what exactly such nature meant, I could see that it was not just a mana trick, but something more.

My strategy was much similar to what Janelor had been doing with Mana to empower her

abilities directly, only using Divine Spark as fuel rather than mana.

But, as a needy whimper escaped her mouth, I abandoned that track and focused on the present.

“Please,” she whimpered, and I was more than enthusiastic about understanding what exactly she wanted to think.

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Skill Share

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## COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

# Chapter Two Hundred Twenty

I wanted to follow her implied request, but not before teasing her a bit first.

“It’s rare for you to be so kind when giving an order,” I whispered mockingly even as I continued to rub against her body, enjoying the sensation of her flawless skin, each second driving the sensation higher. “What do I owe this change?”

Another whimper escaped her lips, one she let out in response, showing just how much the pleasure she had been enjoying loosened her attitude.

Not that I could blame her, as she had been dealing with the weight of her Divine Spark for a very long time, and I could hardly imagine the extent of the stress such a problem caused her without any hope of resolution.

Add that to the responsibilities of managing Silver Spires, the royal politics that seemed to be determined to include her, undead attacks, and most importantly, the constant presence of the Eternals...

Yeah, neither her initial stress, nor the elation she felt as the weight of her biggest problem disappeared was entirely surprising.

“No answer, huh,” I whispered. “What a rude action. And do you know what happens to rude headmistresses?”

She flinched, but that might be more about me suddenly ceasing my flow of mana, stopping the slow binding process she had been enjoying. “W-what happens?” she found herself muttering reflexively, the shiver she let out as she said so impressive.

Especially considering she was tightly locked between the wall and my body.

“They face a choice,” I whispered, stretching the limits of Speech to the limits as I extended the cadence of my tone, wanting to elicit a reflexive response from her. Of course, even with my Speech and Charisma, it was not exactly a simple trick to pull.

I only dared to attempt it because of her current state.

“W-what choice?” she whispered.

“They either stop getting massages, or receive punishment,” I whispered.

“Punishment,” her answer came immediately, her determination beautiful. I felt her body stiffen as she realized the nature of her words, but before she could rethink her stance or take back her statement, my hand rose, landing on her ass.

The cry she let out was beautiful. It was certainly not pained, as to actually hurt her, I needed to hit hard enough to ruin the moment.

Luckily, that was not necessary, as the indignity of being spanked was much more impactful for someone in her position. For better or worse, she had ruled the school with a distant yet unyielding fist, enough to fall into the habit that even the simplest of her comments couldn't be violated.

The lack of pain was actually better, leaving her bereft of an excuse she could rely on to explain her shocked yet beautiful cry.

After the first spank, she had enough time to change her mind, but chose to stay silent as I used the opportunity to deliver another mana flood, just enough to make her consider suffering the indignity.

After all, what were a few spanks compared to finding herself pinned naked in her room, obediently giving up her body just for a massage...

The number of spanks slowly piled up as time passed, each arriving with a cracking sound, and leaving a soft, stinging sensation behind — one that I cast a reversed-healing spell to leave on her ass, making her flawless skin redden.

The other continued to caress her wings, their spectacular sensitivity not exactly helping her to recover from the conflicting physical feelings she had been enjoying.

Just as she was starting to get used to the new state, I pushed her limits once more, this time letting my hand slip low after the spank, dripping to a dangerous part of her anatomy.

A part that was sopping wet.

“N-noo,” she gasped in shock as my fingers danced around her clit, finally breaking the silence she maintained during the spanking. “That’s too—” she added, but her voice died halfway as my fingers continued to dance around her sensitive spot, the pleasure building once more.

“What part of punishment you don’t understand?” I asked even as I finally let go of her wing, letting that hand slip between the wall and her body. Her gasp only intensified as I captured her



nipple between my fingers, twisting hard enough to trigger another flood of pleasure, another touch of Healing magic perfect to add a layer of a shock to the equation.

“I don’t—” she started, but as my fingers sank into her shockingly large breasts, she was once again betrayed by her own body, the flood of pleasure coalescing into a beautiful moan. It was a tense, throaty one, showing she was not too far from another climax.

The perfect thing to take as an implicit reaction to push further.

“You don’t, what?” I asked as I shifted my hands to her waist and pulled her as I stepped out of the bath, once again in the bridal hold, her beautiful wings flapping in trembles.

Yet, as she found herself lying on her bed, all she was able to achieve was a needy whimper. I grabbed her hips and pulled them up momentarily, preparing her for the real event, earning no complaint as she tried to deal with the invasion of pleasure.

Her hips stayed up as I pulled back, making no attempt to change her vulnerable position. Yet, I didn’t slide instantly. No, there was still one thing I wanted to do. Something I was being tempted for a long time. Since I had discovered her true nature.

I grabbed her wings.

It wasn’t a gentle touch, nor it was a violent move. The best word to describe it as I grabbed them was firm. As I pulled them up, she let out a shocked moan.

I paused a moment, enjoying the feeling of utter control as I grabbed her wings, her hands flailing helplessly as the invading pleasure ruined her coordination.

To make things even more fun, it wasn’t the greed that was keeping her obedient, as I had ceased using the mana flood as I carried her.

No, it was an even more beautiful sin that kept her in place.

Lust.

“Such a horny angel,” I said as I tightened my grip around her wings, and slid inside her, accompanied by a spectacular moan.

And just like that, I took the virginity of a beautiful angel.

As her warmth tightened around me, I paused, properly enjoying the changes in the nature of

our little warped relationship, from the days I had treated her as a distant scary figure, to the days I had treated her as a strong yet naive boss...

Now, she was just a little horny angel, squirming under the invasion of unfamiliar pleasure as I continued to enjoy her phenomenal tightness, each second driving my intense pleasure even higher.

She might have an issue with my sudden pause, but if she did, she was too busy moaning with the constant invasion of pleasure to deal with it properly.

I didn't stay motionless for long, of course. Regardless of how monumental the moment felt, it wasn't enough to actually make me disregard the spectacular moment I was in — though, even if I did, she was ready to remind me with the sweetness of her moans, the rhythm of her dangling breasts, and the beautiful contrast of the color of her hips, still carrying the mark of my spanks.

I pushed forward, something she enjoyed rather well if the way her back arched was any indicator.

My hold over her wings tightened as my hips started rocking back and forth, pushing forward as her tight body remodeled around me, her moans exploding loudly enough to deafen a weaker man.

For a while, I did nothing other than moving back and forth, just enjoying the relentless invasion of pleasure, her tightness getting more and more. There was no banter, no teasing, no order.

Just a steady rhythm of our bodies as I pushed her toward the second climax of her life. One that didn't take long to arrive, hitting her with all the strength of a collapsing building, pushing her toward the land of unconsciousness...

Only for me to prevent that by casting a simple healing spell.

The utility of magic was hard to overstate.

However, the spell was not there to wake her up directly. Instead, I cast that to temporarily block her natural pain resistance. Waking her up was a task for my hand, stopping and grabbing her beautiful wings for a moment as I spanked her beautiful ass.

The jolt of pain was perfect to make her open her eyes despite the incredible flood of pleasure. "Do you need a break, or can the great headmistress of Silver spires continue without a pesky

break.”

It was proof of her pride that even under the circumstances, it made her twist her neck and catch my gaze, her expression beautifully tight, showing hints of anger — hints only because it was being drowned in a sea of pleasure and trembling.

“I’ll take it as a no,” I smirked even as I pressed my hand on her back, pushing her down for another session...

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Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

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## COMPANIONS

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[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Twenty-One

The sensation of slipping inside her for a second time was just as amazing, though even as I slipped inside her, I realized one very amusing detail. A little oversight — one that wasn't happening for the first time.

“By the way, sweetie, before forgetting,” I started even as I skewered her halfway, enjoying her moan. “I remembered that you're yet to bestow your beautiful name to me. Would you be so kind to deliver that?” I said.

Despite the invasion of pleasure — and some more material things, she found the power to twist her neck to catch my gaze, her face colored with an intense surprise, enough to suggest that she was sharing the same surprise.

She might have had some choice words about the circumstances we found ourselves in another time, but, still trembling after her last orgasm while a new wave of pleasure invaded her body, a lone stammer was all she was able to handle.

“M-Mariel,” she managed to whisper.

“Mariel,” I repeated, testing the cadence of her voice, enjoying the cadence of her name. “A beautiful name,” I added, intersecting it with a slap to her ass, adding to the rhythmic sound of my hips. “Almost as beautiful as the way you're tightening around me.”

“S-shut up,” she managed to say even as she shifted her head and buried her face to the pillow, earning a chuckle from me at the intensity of her blush, even at the moment, the slightest attempt to dirty talk enough to break her confidence.

“How amusing,” I said, not bothering to keep it to a whisper, and she buried her face in the pillow even deeper.

Her pillow did more than just hide her shame. It also helped to suppress her boundless moans that displayed the capabilities of her supernatural lungs. Not exactly a development that increased my enjoyment.

At least, not before her moans got even more intense as my impalings started to invade deeper and deeper, her moans getting loud enough to make the muffling of the pillow rather redundant.

“Before forgetting, the reward of your obedience,” I added as I reached to my mana reserves.

[- 318 Mana]

The sudden addition of the earlier Light-based massage trick worked the opposite direction I was expecting, and rather than pushing her delirium deeper, it actually made her act.

Well, if I counted the act that was limited to her neck twisting to catch my gaze once more, while the rest of her body stayed under me obediently as I pulled her wings to ram inside her again and again acting.

Interpreting her gaze was not too hard. Once again receiving the reward that allowed them to slowly bind with her Divine Spark allowed her to cut through the pleasure, reminding her that just an hour ago, we were in her office, having a deep discussion about the nature of the Gods.

Even more amusingly, I caught a beautiful sheepish expression on her face, suggesting that, as she lost herself in pleasure, she didn't even realize that the flow of mana from me had ceased.

Which robbed her of the only excuse she could have for the situation she was suffering. If I continued, she might have at least justified the position she found herself in for herself. Yet, unless the person in question was delusional enough to count as sick, they required a strong excuse to function as a pillar for their self-deception.

The effects of my massage were certainly such a pillar. Such a pity that she didn't even notice its absence, making it essentially useless.

Her expression cycled between expressions, ranging between abject shock and pure arousal, before settling in a grudging acceptance. Grudging, because she clearly didn't appreciate the indignity she found herself in.

Acceptance, because her expression told me that she had no intention of stopping halfway, not with a pleasure she had never felt before invaded her body.

I decided to test that determination for a moment. "I can stop if you—" I started, only for her to freeze in abject shock for a fleeting moment before interrupting me.

"No!" she gasped.

I chuckled even as I spanked her ass. "Try listening to my questions completely, Mariel," I said, pausing after I said her name, enjoying its cadence like a particularly tasty piece of dessert, its delicious aroma lingering on my tongue.

“Mariel,” I repeated, enjoying the tone, yet, even as I did that, I realized that that taste wasn’t as theoretical as I assumed.

She shivered with something more than just pleasure, showing I wasn’t the only one that was feeling that. I turned my attention to her magic even as I repeated her name once more, feeling her magic flaring subtly and mixing with my mana even more efficiently.

“P-please, slow down,” she whispered, showing she was being impacted by that.

“Why do you say so, Mariel,” I said, enjoying her trembles getting even more intense as I uttered her voice.

“B-because it’s my ...” she started, only to slow down.

“Your what, Mariel?” I said, enjoying her tremble even more while I felt a fleeting connection between us, more than just her mana merging against mine. But I failed to understand the full extent.

“Because it’s my ... true name,” she admitted.

“Oh, really?” I asked, feeling curious enough to ask. “And why is your true name having such an effect?” I asked, feeling important enough to pause for a moment — but not important enough to actually pull out.

The reflexive gasp she let out as my constant drilling stopped for a fleeting moment was beautiful, showing just how much she didn’t want the pleasure to stop. “I ... I don’t know,” she whispered, which might be the single most obvious lie I had ever heard.

I was too used to drawing conclusions from half-formed pieces to fail to read her complications. The true name was clearly something magical about her nature, enough to be treated magically important, but considering the shock, she was displaying about the effect it triggered, it was rather obvious that it was more about her changing true nature as she successfully absorbed Divine Spark and slowly progressed into the rank of the goddess.

Regardless, it also implied that, if I asked her about her name anytime but at the moment, as she was deep into the throes of pleasure, I might have received a different name.

Of course, that left many questions unanswered. The exact definition, for example. Or whether it applied just angels, all supernatural creatures, or all beings including humans — maybe excluding people connected to the system.

It also raised questions unrelated to my sexy headmistress Mariel, such as if it applied to the dragons, whether Janelor was actually the true name of my sexy Dragoness, or if she gave me some kind of daily name.

However, all of those questions for another time, I decided as I restarted the movement of my hips once more, her spectacular tightness once again testing my abilities to stave off a premature explosion.

“Let’s leave the question of your true name for a moment, Mariel,” I said, enjoying the shiver of her mana, one that reflected in her body immediately. “Instead, just answer my question. Do you want me to stop...” I said, pausing for a moment to see whether she would explode in a panic once more.

To her credit, she didn’t.

“... distracting you with my mana while we’re enjoying our special embrace?” I asked, enjoying the way her head dipped down.

“No,” she muttered, but her beautiful voice was subdued as she said so, somehow feeling self-conscious about her earlier reaction. It didn’t survive for long before the moans of pleasure stole the show once more, of course.

“Such a greedy little angel,” I said teasingly. “Wanting a massage and a proper fucking at the same time...”

Unlike the earlier euphemistic phrasing, the more explicit word was once again enough to push her into a near-catatonic state, making her bury her head into the pillow once more.

Yet, her hips stayed raised, allowing me to repeatedly ram into her beautiful body without the slightest pause, showing that, her extreme reaction toward dirty language was not a barrier to her pleasure.

I said nothing else, once again letting the time fly, measuring it by the light sheen of sweat that started to gather on her skin, a little sign of impurity that I had never seen on her before, showing the depths of pleasure she lost.

As time passed, the pleasure started to get too intense, challenging my ability to contain myself, so I decided to surrender to the pleasure. But not before one last attempt to tease her beautifully.



“I’m about to come,” I said, which made her tense beautifully.

“N-not inside,” she stammered, showing that, while she might be woefully inexperienced, it clearly didn’t include not knowing the basic mechanics of the process and the implications.

“Not even if it would arrive with an amazing flood of mana, enough to fill you to the brim?” I asked, which was enough to make her pause in indecision for a while.

Once again highlighting her lack of knowledge when it came to the applied side of the carnal business, because froze long enough to make her answer irrelevant.

“Too late,” I said even as I let my control over my body loosen, filling her with my seed explosively.

“N-nooo, that’s too much!” she cried, but that was all she was able to say before a spectacular tremble hit her body, triggering another climax, this time even more explosive than the previous one.

Since I promised her, I let my magic infuse my explosion. And, as a reward for her spectacular obedience, I even made sure to intensify the impact of Tantric to quicken her merging even more.

[-4728 Mana]

Such beautiful obedience needed to be rewarded, I thought, my mind already busy with many interesting things I could apply to her.

Unfortunately, as I looked down, I found her already collapsed, the intense chain of orgasms she experienced without a break, when combined with the intensity of the mana flood, proved more than enough to break through her supernatural physical resistance.

“Well, that was a fun start,” I murmured, spending a moment to think whether I should go and work.

But, the presence of her beautiful soft wings was enough to change my mind. Instead, I lay down next to her, smiling as her wings reflexively wrapped around me protectively.

I fell asleep, not before one last spell, changing the nature of her bed from a simple cot to a large, four-poster bed, decadent enough for us to bury ourselves.

And, just as one last joke, pure black..

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[Level: 36 Experience: 631374 / 666000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 7334 / 7334 Mana: 5106 / 9000 ]

#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [114/140]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Twenty-Two

Sleeping in a decadently comfortable bed was certainly an enjoyable experience, something that I had enjoyed greatly since my experience had reached a point of great success.

In comparison, the current bed I had been sleeping in, which was more of a bare cot that even a servant would feel insulted to use, was supposed to be an annoying downgrade. Clearly, the spell I used to transform it had been dispelled.

I guessed Mariel was responsible for it. Not intentionally, but the integration of her Divine Spark resulted in occasional flares of her mana, and dispelled it.

Not that it disappointed me. The enjoyment of a soft bed was nothing compared to the great warmth of Mariel's beautiful wings.

Which was why I woke up immediately as I felt those wings shuffling around me, pulling back halfway, too smooth and deliberate to be just a sleep reaction.

My dear headmistress was awake.

Not only I kept my gaze shut, but also applied my extensive abilities to give her the impression that I was still sleeping — which was not unbelievable considering just how much physical effort I had expended and how much mana I spent in the process of keeping her happy.

And kept her happy, I did even as I finally broke her centuries-long dry streak in a very memorable manner.

I was curious how she would react while thinking I was still asleep.

Without the mind-numbing pleasure that impaired her sound decision-making capabilities, I expected her to slide away, and thought that the question was whether she would maintain enough presence of mind to do slowly, without 'waking' me up, or she would pull back with enough speed to force me to abandon my fake-sleep ploy.

She had just the virginity that she had been maintaining for centuries. An exaggerated reaction was not exactly unexpected.

Yet, she surprised me by not picking either of those options.

At first, her wings continued to pull back, giving me the impression that she would pick the first

option, yet, that movement was soon arrested. And even better, after a few more seconds passed, it reversed, once again tightly wrapping around me.

The warmth and comfort radiation from them as they slowly wrapped around me was beautiful, tempting me to go back to sleep. I fully intended to follow that temptation, but soon, a contradicting message arrived, arresting my slow descent to unconsciousness.

It was her finger, moving on my chest.

It wasn't a hard or painful touch. On the contrary, it was a weak one, soft enough to be written off as nonexistent, as heavy and permanent as a dream, existing only for a second before disappearing.

That disappearance didn't last forever, and a minute later, her finger landed on my chest once more, this time staying a little more before pulling back.

I lost count of how many times she repeated that, but with each repeat, the time between her touches got shorter, and her touches lingered more.

The duration wasn't the only thing that changed. The pressure her finger generated increased accordingly, from lighter than a feather to a noticeable caress as she traced my chest muscles, her fascination impossible to be mistaken.

I still had a lot of things to do, but wrapped in the wings of an angel, I was feeling rather decadent — not to mention curious about just how far she would push. Considering her hesitant start, I guessed that my abs would be her limit.

The answer turned out to be more than that. She first climbed to my shoulders then shifted to my arms, continuing to trace my muscles, then slipped down to my abs. There, she spent less time than I had been expecting, continuing to slip lower.

Dragging along my erection, shocking me with her daring. I didn't expect her to leverage the benefits of her new situation that quickly.

Though, the moment she touched my full erection — as it should be considering I was sharing the bed with a naked angel — I felt a great shock, though it was not as great as when, rather than pulling back, she stayed on, moving back and forth.

Soon, her finger was joined by a second one, and a couple seconds later, her palm joined the fray.

My acting ability was my savior as her hands moved up and down on my shaft, allowing me to hide the signs of both the surprise I felt and the arousal that was steadily growing.

Admittedly, it was not exactly the best handjob I had received, with its uneven pacing and unnecessary tightness, but that didn't prevent me from enjoying it immensely — and her fumbling that highlighted her lack of experience gave me much more pleasure than a skilled handjob.

Opening my eyes and greeting her was tempting, but not as tempting as just how long she would stay there, exploring the unfamiliar texture of my length.

I stayed there, waiting until she stopped while I enjoyed the amazing warmth of her wings, enjoying the soft nature of the light that infused my body — though I had to maintain a thin layer of light mana inside myself to prevent that from turning into something more painful.

Even in its calmest state, the light was destructively burning.

Her hand stayed in place for several minutes. Soon, I realized her movement getting even choppy, but the only struggle that was created was to make me feel the challenge of forcing it down.

I felt curious about her actions. I needed to keep my eyes closed, but with my magical sensitivity, it wasn't as big of a problem as it would have been a couple months ago. Especially since Mariel was an intensely magical being, her natural light mana radiating off her body without her robe to block it.

And, by focusing on the radiance, I could 'see' her movements without opening my eyes. Of course, it wasn't a perfect view, as, ironically, the intensity of her glow made it very hard for me to pick the details, but I could still notice the broad strokes.

Like the fact that her hands were dancing on her breasts repeatedly.

Holding back my smirk was an even bigger challenge than hiding my challenge to her clumsy handjob — especially since, unlike a blowjob, enthusiasm was definitely not a replacement for actual skill — but I managed to keep it down.

Curious how she would follow.

Her hand soon pulled away from her chest and landed back on mine, caressing my skin once again, treating exploring my body more important than enhancing her own pleasure.

Soon, her free hand slipped down to my thighs, but then she chose to push them to the side. I didn't want to wait for long to learn about that. The familiar weight of her breasts pressing against my legs was indicative enough that she wanted to get a closer look at my shaft.

As she waited there, I assumed that it was the extent of her ambition. But then, her fingers wrapped around once more, this time dancing gently as if she wanted to see its reaction rather than giving a handjob.

It was a much more pleasant feeling, especially with her tits pressing to my legs. I took the risk of cracking my eyes, only to see her face scrunched in intense concentration. It would have been just cute if it wasn't for her wings, spread on her back, twitching with her every move — yet the way they throbbed with magic was more than enough to remind me that they were not just nice-looking accessories, but the representation of her power.

The power that just enhanced significantly after the last night's adventure where I helped her to finally bond with her Light Spark. Yet, interestingly, she was more fascinated by the process she attained rather than the result, considering she preferred to molest me rather than wake me up so that she could ask some more questions about how that was possible.

I wouldn't have answered them, of course, but her preference was interesting nonetheless.

I didn't keep my eyes open, but I managed to sneak occasional glances without alerting her, each repeat showing a growing excitement as she started to abandon her awkwardness and embraced the erotic nature of the situation.

It was nothing compared to what we had been doing the previous night, but the fact she was taking initiative made it even tastier...

Soon, she started moving up and down with surprising fluidity, suggesting she was not aware of her own movement, especially since the exaggerated movement would have been enough to wake me up if I had been actually asleep.

I continued to relax in her bed, the comfort of my blanket more than enough to compensate for the lumpy coat underneath. Meanwhile, the movement range of her fingers got larger, climbing high enough to graze the crown, dipping down to touch the base, and even leaving a lingering touch on my balls.

Just as I thought it would be the end, she managed to surprise me once more.

In the form of her beautiful lips, parting in preparation...

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HP: 7334 / 7334 Mana: 9000 / 9000 ]

#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [114/140]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation



## COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Twenty-Three

I barely managed to close my eyes as she glanced up, no doubt testing the signs of waking up. With her little test giving a negative result, she started leaning down even as her hands wrapped around the base of my shaft.

Her lips followed a moment later, repeating the same effect around the crown of my shaft, adding another layer to my pleasure, especially when she started moving up and down. Her movements were choppy, but not completely unfamiliar.

She might not have done anything like this before, but clearly, she had lived far too long to never stumble on others doing something like that. Soon, she reached a simple, yet effective rhythm, her natural grace helping to compensate for her lack of experience.

That didn't mean her hesitancy was gone, of course. However, her taste for pleasure was finally awakened, and it was a good combination when it was mixed with her curiosity.

I just watched, happy with the pleasure. Her technique — if it could be called that in the first place — was lackluster at best, but one of the advantages of a blowjob was enthusiasm was more than enough to compensate for a lack of skill.

And she had lots of enthusiasm. Her wings, still sprawled, twitching beautifully, only enhanced the inherent view of the moment.

I let her play freely without any intervention as she teased my shaft from every possible angle, her lips going deep enough to reach halfway mark. I was tempted to grab her head and push her down, curious how her wings would react in such a circumstance.

Pity I was too curious about how far my naughty angel would push while thinking that I was still asleep.

I limited myself to watching. Luckily, she was too distracted to keep her eyes open, allowing me to watch her rapt concentration as her expression constantly cycled in a wide range, from shame to arousal.

She pulled before I could reach a climax, and I prepared to stand up, to teach her why it wasn't a good idea to wake me up in such a teasing manner and stop halfway.

Or, a rather excellent way, as it depended on the way one looked at the issue.

However, before I could stand up, I noticed her magic flaring, and she cast a spell on me. Ironically, it was a credit of my trust that I didn't retaliate reflexively and instead checked the spell structure curiously, only to see it was a sleep spell.

A weak one that would have certainly failed against a woke target, even if I was as weak as I led her to believe.

However, it was an excellent way to make sure a sleeping person wouldn't wake up.

Which had some beautiful implications.

So, I wasn't surprised when she turned her back to me before climbing on the bed, her legs on both sides of my body. One perk of the position, it allowed me to open my eyes without fearing getting caught.

Which was excellent, because the sight of a beautiful angel from the back, her glowing silver wings spread wide as she hesitantly lowered herself was a memory I would cherish for all eternity.

I bit my lips as she finally lowered herself enough for our bodies to connect, her warmth phenomenal as she wrapped around my girth, and the fact that she stopped her blowjob just as it was starting to get amazing helped to carry the pleasure to the next stage.

It would have been an amazing trick even if it was intentional, and its accidental nature only made it more amazing.

I watched in appreciation as she slowly lowered herself with a speed that surprised me, showing that my forceful education had taken root excellently. Her back arched as she easily passed halfway mark.

A loud moan rippled in her mouth, showing her confidence in her sleeping spell trick. Too bad for her it was completely unfounded, leaving me a desire to move and pin her down to teach her about being more careful.

Yet, as she sank deeper, I decided on the lesson and focus on enjoying her beautiful treatment. She moved up and down, experimenting with the pace until she settled to a furious up and down, her wings waving in the same pattern in reverse to balance her momentum.

A rather inventive way of using her wings, one that I enjoyed greatly.

I waited, curious just how far she would leverage her freedom.

Quite a bit, as it turned out as she leaned forward, putting her hands on my thighs before her hips started to move even faster with the leverage, the sight of her devouring my shaft, again and again, creating a rather excellent view for me to occupy myself.

And that occupation helped me to suppress my desire to flip her and start her next lesson.

Her hips moved both back and forth and up and down, her wetness enveloping me greatly, her natural elegance once again helping to elevate her movements greatly. Another moan escaped her beautiful lips, making me curious about her expression.

Pity, she didn't have a mirror in the room, and casting a spell to do so would have alerted her that I wasn't as sleepy as she assumed me to be. Her hips continued to work, making me feel a slight pity that she didn't get the benefits of the system.

Such steady work would have already earned her my first perk.

However, just because she wasn't able to get the benefits of it, didn't mean she couldn't receive the benefits in another way. I let my magic rise slowly, coating my shaft.

It made her stop and throw a panicked glance back — at least, that's what I assumed as I had to close my eyes to fake sleeping. Her body stayed twisted for a while, her posture suggesting she looked at me, no doubt trying to see if I had woken up.

But she stayed impaled even as she did so, showing she didn't want to stop receiving the pleasure she had been sneaking. I gave no reaction as I did so, but let my mana calm slightly.

Selling the idea that it was just a reflexive reaction, one that overlapped with the pleasure I was feeling.

She said nothing, but even as her presence disappeared from around my shaft, I didn't react, remembering the earlier situation with the blowjob. It turned out to be the correct decision as she settled around my girth once more.

This time her hands pressed against my chest.

It was a risky decision, but I found myself opening my eyes after her hips started moving, this time even more heatedly. But not before letting my mana rise once more, tainted with Tantric energy, slowly filling inside her.

[-381 Mana]

It turned out to be a good decision. When I opened my eyes, I found hers conveniently closed, which allowed me to take the view she created fully rather than trying to steal an occasional glimpse.

Which was good, as the view she created easily took a spot in the greatest views I had ever seen. Her wings were spread fully open, their glow even more intense as my mana invaded her body. And, that silver light contrasted against her body, highlighting the slight sheen that covered her skin in the best way possible.

Her beautiful breasts jumbled pleasingly with every desperate movement of her hips, begging for me to grab them and tease her hard nipples for eternity. Her face was contorted with pleasure as her core devoured my shaft repeatedly, her lips open as endless moans started to escape her lips.

I wondered whether she was that confident in her spell, or she had forgotten the dubious nature of the start of her morning exercise.

Either way, I said nothing as she rocked desperately on my lap, too distracted by the pleasure to pay attention to such nuances.

Her moans exploded against the walls as they started to gain a desperate quality, tempting me to use the trick that I had been fond of, blocking her arousal with magic to keep her on the edge.

Tempting, but after some thought, I decided against it. The poor girl had spent centuries without knowing the touch of a man. It would be plain mean to test her with such a radical edge play.

For now, at least, I decided, shelving the idea for later, when she got a more useful sense of what was ordinary and what was not.

While I was considering the appropriate time to pull some interesting tricks, she finally reached the peak she had been searching for. Her body tensed as she started trembling desperately, each second enhancing her pleasure even more.

As her moans subsided, she looked down, only now noticing my eyes were wide open. "Good morning, boss," I said with a chuckle as she froze in shock. Which I leveraged by grabbing her waist and flipping our positions, trapping her under me in a missionary position, still firmly

inside her.

She was done with her morning exercise.

It was my turn now.

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[Level: 36 Experience: 631374 / 666000

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Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 7334 / 7334 Mana: 8826 / 9000 ]

#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [114/140]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Twenty-Four

“You have — you have awakened,” Mariel found herself muttering with a palpable shock, but even then had been interrupted by a moan halfway as I slid inside her.

“What do you think?” I said with a chuckle as my hips started to pick up speed. Since she had kindly completed the necessary foreplay — and more — I had no problems rushing forward at full speed.

“I ... Right now?” she asked, her hopeful tone rather obvious, which meant she had realized I had been playing with her a bit.

“Oh, sweetie, I’m a light sleeper,” I said, which earned a gasp of shame from her. Which was misguided at best, but I let that slide, as I had enjoyed her juvenile reaction. Not as much as I enjoyed the way she was tightening around me downstairs, of course, but to be fair, there were very few things in life that could match the way an actual angel wrapped around my shaft.

“I need to go and start working,” she managed to stammer, which would have been more convincing if two things weren’t true. First, she was the boss, one that scared everyone enough that no one would dare to even visit her office without being summoned, let alone ask her why she was late.

The second piece of evidence was more direct. Her hips started to move even as she delivered her excuse, displaying the abilities she had learned during her earlier adventure in a different way, showing that she was not as committed to stopping me as her words implied.

If someone else was using that excuse despite clear desire, I might have actually followed it to teach her a lesson. But my poor angel had been dealing with an enforced puritan lifestyle for centuries, and it would have been too cruel to do so.

Instead, I teased her with a spank. “You can always take a sick leave, sweetie,” I said as I let my hand linger on her ass, caressing softly, making her tremble in anticipation, temporarily stopping the rhythm of her hips.

“M-maybe —” she whispered, which turned into a wordless growl as I used the opportunity to push forward, triggering an explosive moan as I touched her depths once again.

“It’s clearly justified,” I said even as I tightened my grip and pulled out just enough to flip her, making her balance herself on the bed on all fours.



Allowing me to grab her wings once more as I slid inside her, flaring my mana to caress her feathers, leveraging its softness in the process. And that was not the only way I was using my mana. I gathered a thicker flood and filled her insides with each push, once again assisting her to assimilate her Light Divine Spark.

[-3183 Mana]

She certainly deserved a reward after her naughty morning adventure.

Her moans got even more intense as my mana invaded her body, once again efficiently working on her bonding process with the Light Spark.

The process wasn't complete, far from it, but even the development was enough to progress it significantly.

"Good," I said cheerfully as her hips started moving once again, responding to the mana flood rather intensely, my teasing tone making her move even faster. I had several words to tease her about the situation, but she was still reasonably sensitive, and I didn't want to push her too much in any case.

No matter how self-possessed she looked in her role as a headmistress, she was a fragile beauty, and it made teasing her a dangerous proposition. Especially since she was already overwhelmed by getting caught during her morning trickery.

Instead, I pulled her wings back as I started impaling her even more aggressively, enjoying her repeated cries.

Under the pure invasion of pleasure, it didn't take long for the last vestiges of her little adventure to disappear completely, leaving her to moan and gasp repeatedly, her words long forgotten.

It wasn't the first time I had seen her like this, as she hadn't been different the last night, especially during the later half, where the unfamiliar pleasure blanketed her mind. Her delirious moans suggested that just a night of experience was not enough for her to generate familiarity as well.

I managed to hold back my desire to explode inside her for a while as I quickened my invasion, doing my best to give her an even more explosive experience — at least, as much as I could manage without doing anything creative, which would, at this point, shut her down completely.

Still, that didn't mean I had nothing else I had in mind, I thought even as I flipped her once more, but this time I stayed straight, which left her torso free from my view.

She noticed my gaze, her wings folding immediately to hide her face and her torso, which, at this point, was simply amazing. "No need for that sweetie," I whispered as I grabbed her wings and slowly parted them, which required no strength as she didn't resist.

But she whimpered beautifully in shame as she covered her face with her hands, her expression simply an incarnation of cuteness.

"Honey, let's put those hands to better use," I said as I grabbed her wrists, slowly pulling her wrist forward until her hands landed over her breasts. "Now, squeeze," I said even as I directed her fingers, teaching her how to explore her own body.

Her expression cycled between shyness and arousal as her fingers clamped around her nipples, while I still played with her wrists, making her twist them slowly.

Soon, I pulled back — well, let my hand slide lower to caress her stomach — and let her hands handle their task independently. Her hands stayed in place, dancing over her beautiful breasts, the effects of it clear as she started moving her hips thirstily, proving that the pleasure was stronger than the vestiges of shame she was dealing with.

I managed to keep my lips shut despite my desire to tease her, not wanting to interrupt the growing show.

An amazing decision, it turned out, as soon, she pulled one of her hands away, only to follow the direction of my hands and reached lower.

I grabbed her wrist, leading it toward her clit, our fingers tangled together as we teased her most sensitive spot together, rubbing against her softness, the pleasure growing for her.

Then, I noticed a flare on the wards, and her eyes widened. "E-emergency," she whispered in shock. "There's an attack!"

"Where?" I asked even as I started cursing at the inappropriate timing of the attacker.

"One of the outposts at the south," she said, which was clearly communicated by the wards. "A big one, they need reinforcements immediately."

"How immediately?" I asked, quickly recalculating the distance.

“The monster tide is about to reach the destination, maybe twenty minutes,” she said.

“Good,” I said with a sudden wild smirk. “It’s enough for me to finish my job and reach there,” I said.

Her eyes widened in shock. “W-wait—“ she gasped, which was all she was able to say before I leaned forward once more, trapping her under my height. Our lips latched together as I let my hips go free, invading her drenched core with an absolute lack of mercy, the clapping of flesh filling the room, loud enough to overwhelm her suppressed moans.

Facing a sudden time crunch, I abandoned every sense of restraint as I wanted to teach her about the true meaning of education.

When I pulled back from the kiss to impale her even more aggressively, her only response was to moan, even more, an impressive delirium coloring her tone, suggesting she was slowly losing all connection with reality.

An expected outcome under my reckless invasion, which was good, as it was a much better way to use her amazing lips than trying to deliver useless arguments.

“Now, let’s open those beautiful legs more,” I whispered as I pressed my hands to her thighs, parting them for the next stage. Which came as I changed my alignment slightly, drilling her down.

“Too ... much,” she managed to gasp, but even that took half a minute for her as her moans interrupted her several times, her body rebelling against her. But even as she said so, she couldn’t help but keep her eyes open, watching me disappear into her core again and again without a hint of mercy.

Yet, she found herself opening her legs, even more, allowing me even better access.

Her flexibility was simply phenomenal.

I would have asked her to stand up to explore another position for a fleeting moment, but the way her legs started to tremble suggested that it would take a miracle for her to stand upright. And while I had several means to achieve that miracle, with the sudden invasion forcing my hand, I didn’t have the luxury of dealing with those.

So, I continued my simple yet effective assault until my body decided it was time to stop, exploding inside her, filling her with both my biological marker and my magical touch.

[-975 Mana]

I would have rewarded her with even more mana, but with the upcoming fight, I decided to play it more conservatively. Though, it was still sufficient to break the last vestige of her consciousness as she collapsed against the bed, muttering softly...

“Rest well,” I whispered as I leaned down and left a lingering kiss on her temple. “I’ll be back for the second round soon enough.”

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Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

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#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [114/140]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

## PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Twenty-Five

At this point, I was familiar with the operation of Silver Spires to know exactly where to look to get a comprehensive view of the situation, and it was not the commander's office.

My destination was not one of the command rooms, but a less important location. The communication room.

Responsible for collecting and aggregating every single emergency message the school received from the surrounding towns.

I did so, because while accessing raw information was time-consuming, it was certainly not as time-consuming as trying to unravel the warped reports of the ones responsible for analyzing that information.

I needed to spend some time to get rid of all spies there, but it was one of the tasks I was procrastinating repeatedly, more important — or more entertaining — tasks taking priority.

I cast a sleeping spell on the people that were manning the room to keep my intrusion hidden. The spell was ingenious, not only sending them to sleep, but also ensuring that they wouldn't realize that they had a five-minute gap in their memories.

It was a good idea to keep the source of my information hidden.

Of course, that didn't mean every single message was reliably correct. Far from it, and not because the ones that sent those messages were actually enemy agents. No, they were ordinary guards defending their town, which probably assumed exaggerating the threat would allow them to receive help quickly.

"Not all of them, at least," I murmured as I went through the first few messages, seeing exaggerated action reports, describing monster hordes attacking from the north and west that was far too big to be believable. Then, I moved to the next one, which described a fresh undead army attacking from the south.

My frown was already deepening at this point, then, I read one report in the South, about a great forest fire with supernatural origins, forcing the town to evacuate.

I started going through the reports even quicker, but my earlier disbelief was abandoned. My stats allowed me to go through all information easily, but the results didn't help my mood the slightest.

I realized the Silver Spires were under siege once more, and, if even a fraction of the information I could read here was accurate, it was a far bigger threat than Zokras had ever presented, even with the assistance of the beast hordes.

I didn't even bother speculating about the source of the attack before I burst into action, sending magical messages. Two of them went to a great distance, utilizing the teleportation trick — as I had managed to understand the mechanics enough to send a small, sealed package without going myself as long as there was a beacon — to Titania and Helga, warning both of them to be alert for an attack.

The risk of a coordinated attack was simply too great.

With that warning, both teams knew what to do.

The third message went to Oeyne, asking her to drop everything she was busy with, arm herself, and go to the headmistress' tower, ready to intervene in case of an ambush, and ignore every order that didn't come directly from the headmistress.

Another message went to Janelor, asking her to be ready for any potential intrusion.

Then, after some pause, I created another lengthy message to Helga — too big to be safely teleported — and hid it in my room, in Helga's favorite book, with a small ward to alert her once she entered there, explaining the important facts and developments I had managed to discover, the secrets of the Eternals, the Princess, the headmistress, and the dragon, giving her the chance to keep things under control in case of an emergency.

I had a bad feeling about the intensity of the situation, and I wanted her to be ready in case I had to pull away from the school temporarily.

I didn't send a message to Mariel.

I went back to her room directly, and find her still lying on the bed, but she had several reports in hand, and was reading through them with a serious expression. The moment I entered, her wings furled around her body, hiding her nakedness from me while her blush intensified further.

Tempting. If the crisis that I was facing was any simpler, I would have loved to spend twenty minutes enjoying the benefits of her shy reaction.

Pity the situation felt far too dangerous to enjoy such a delay, not when several sources of attack had been triggered.

“The situation is grim,” I said.

“It seems so,” she said, but her intensity certainly didn’t match mine. I would have loved to assume it was about the mood she was in after my extended efforts to keep her happy, but I knew that it wasn’t the case.

“Let me check those reports,” I said as I pulled them off her hand. I had no doubt that, just yesterday, that would have created a great negative reaction of her, maybe enough to make her attack me. This time, she just blushed as our fingers touched momentarily.

Pity the situation was too urgent to tease her about that.

Instead, I focused on the report. The contents were horrible enough to justify my quick trip to the massage room. The threat was undersold greatly, the unquenchable forest fire reduced to a simple fire, the undead army reduced to just an accidental remnant, and the monster hordes diminished.

Oh, they did so in a way that would keep them safe, mentioning the same aspects that initially made me doubt their validity, but they carefully avoided mentioning the number of messages from different sources that drew the same picture, which increased their reliability significantly.

As expected, they were offering a conservative action plan. I had no doubt that they would change the recommendation in a few hours, once it was too late to intervene with most of the armed forces.

Forcing the real elites to leave Silver Spires.

I frowned, wondering who was the target of the plan. Titania, Mariel, Janelor, the Princess?

Or maybe me, which would make my next action rather idiotic, but sometimes, it was best to react immediately.

I pulled a quill toward me and started doing corrections on the page, before passing it to her to read. She did so, her expression getting tighter, which didn’t help when I passed the next few reports.

“How sure you are about its necessity?” she asked, her voice grave as her nudity momentarily forgotten.

“I’m sure enough to be actually afraid of the consequences,” I said.



“Maybe I should go and —” she started, but I didn’t miss the enthusiasm in her tone under her seriousness. Understandable, as our ‘treatment’ told us that for the first time in a very long time, she was free to act outside the suppression wards without directly imploding.

“No, there’s a chance that you’re the target. We can’t afford it.”

“I don’t think that they would do so after all that time —” she said, but I used the opportunity to kiss her lips, using the opportunity to cast a spell on her, a Biomancy spell to enhance the daze she was feeling.

She would have easily resisted it if she wasn’t far too occupied by the way my tongue invaded her beautiful mouth, moaning softly. As much as I enjoyed her sound, it wasn’t just about the pleasure.

[-2830 Mana]

I used it to deliver a great amount of mana in a flood, and unlike the other attempts, it carried the maximum amount of Tantric effect I was able to manage, hastening her Divine Spark transformation significantly.

Enough that I was confident she could operate outside the wards for several minutes without a significant side effect. But that was the limit even if I didn’t want to save some of my mana for the upcoming conflict, as the Divine Spark I transformed still needed to actually bond with her body to be useful, which was not instant.

I cast the spell to make her dazed, because I didn’t want to reveal just how much control I had over the process. When I pulled back, she was still gasping in pleasure.

“I don’t want to risk you,” I said, and she nodded shyly, still under the effect of the searing kiss. “I even arranged a trusted bodyguard warrior for you, you can trust her to block others until Titania return.”

“W-what should I do, then?” she asked.

“Give the order to evacuate all the cities, and pull the population back to Silver Spires, I don’t think we can defend against the attack otherwise. I have a feeling that it’s just to the first wave.”

“We can’t just house all of them here, we don’t have the facilities,” she said.

“Then, we set up a city outside the first one. It wouldn’t take too long to set up a secondary set of wards, I’ll create the basis before I leave,” I said before I pulled the map, and pointed several towns to the North as we started discussing the evacuation efforts.

I wanted to target the ones that were too far away from Silver Spires. Those towns were critical to establishing a trade line, but I had a feeling that trade wouldn’t be a priority concern for a long while.

“Those towns should receive the first orders to retreat,” I said.

“But they are too far away from us, the reinforcements won’t be there on time.”

“I know,” I answered. “That’s why I would go there personally to make sure the evacuation works as intended.”

“Alone!” she gasped in shock. “It’s too risky—“ she started, only to be interrupted by another kiss, but this time, without the mana infusion.

Under the circumstances, I didn’t have the luxury to waste time, so I pulled back after silencing her. “That’s better than the alternative, don’t worry, I know how to defend myself,” I said to her.

It earned a hesitant nod from her, and we turned our attention back to the evacuation plan, and how to arrange setting up the refugee areas.

Luckily, Oeyne was not only a bodyguard. As an accomplished blacksmith, she was a good candidate to handle the communication between the Guild Members and the headmistress despite the bad blood between them.

Especially once Titania returns to take the role of a bodyguard.

Five minutes later, we had a beginning of a plan.

I would have loved to stay and direct the organization myself. Unfortunately, I had a trap to set at the north.

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[Level: 36 Experience: 631374 / 666000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 7334 / 7334 Mana: 6933 / 9000 ]

#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [114/140]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Twenty-Six

As I left the headmistress's room, my first direction was the walls, and saw soldiers and mages, trying to mobilize for battle.

Though, if I didn't know better, I would have thought that they were trying to reenact the actions of a bunch of headless chickens as the mobilization efforts failed utterly. Even as I watched, one soldier carried a bundle of food to a pile, but the moment he put it down, another soldier arrived and carried it back.

Yet, not even for a moment, I attributed that to incompetence. The guards of Silver Spires were not the greatest, but they were far from the level of casual incompetency they had been displaying.

There was one thing that could easily explain the situation. Conflicting orders.

Guessing the source of those conflicting orders was even easier. The spies were acting even more brazen.

I sighed even as I leaned back against the wall, pinching the bridge of my nose as if the pain would help me come to a decision faster.

It wasn't the existence of the spies that surprised me. I knew of their existence for a long, long time, but I didn't focus on cleaning them. A part of that decision was about the lack of time. I always had more important things to focus on.

Yet, another part had been the use of their existence. I was confident to hide my own actions and the full extent of my power from those spies, and in that case, those spies actually turned into a liability against the enemy.

As long as they survived, the enemy was under the impression that they knew what was going on. The moment those spies were lost, they would know the existence of an unpredictable factor, and start reacting accordingly.

It was that fact that was troubling me even at the moment, making it a difficult decision.

I paused a moment, letting my mind focus on all the attack reports I had collected, trying to factor in the spies acting without the fear of getting caught.

"What's the point of trying to keep the cards hidden," I decided. I wasn't sure the enemy was

finally using their full capabilities, but without a doubt, they were using enough force to reveal a considerable portion of the capabilities I had been hiding, enough to show them their spies had been useless for a long time.

Cleaning the spies was not hard, but it was time-intensive work, especially doing it in a way without creating a big crisis. It would have ruined my plans...

If I didn't have a convenient assistant, with abilities and capabilities that were perfect for the task. I paused for a moment to change my outfit to the mysterious man, then I stopped by Mariel's office to take something that would help immensely during my next step...

Before I moved toward the Royal Quarters.

With my growing familiarity, passing through the wards had been trivial, just as it was trivial for me to avoid the soldiers moving in hurriedly. Unlike the soldiers outside, they were moving with speed and precision as I saw Delia incarnation of the princess raining orders on them.

A soft caress of mana showed that it was not the princess that was disguised, but controlling remotely.

They were mobilizing, but it looked like the princess was preparing to leave rather than defend. She clearly saw what I saw with the spies, and decided that the smartest thing was to draw her own path.

It was indeed smart, but directly against my objectives. I decided to give her a better option.

The connection between the puppet and the princess was subtle, but not subtle enough to make it difficult for me to actually track her. I quickly moved, and found the princess alone, her gaze shut.

I stood in front of her, easily avoiding her wards to stand in front of her, and tapped her head. "Wake up, sleepyhead," I said cheerfully as she jerked in fear, which was justified, as I could have easily killed her.

She was able to suppress her fear quickly as she noticed the identity of her attacker. "G-good morning, sir," she managed to say, delivering it perfectly after the slight hitch in her tone at the beginning. "How can I help you?"

Her eyes were interesting, reflecting anger and fear in equal amounts, with a dash of arousal sprinkled in. Clearly, my earlier visit had left a mark.

“I’m here to offer you a deal,” I said, which made her eyebrow quirk considering my word selection. “Yes, you are free to reject if you want, with no consequences,” I added.

“I trust you, sir,” she said, though I could see her disbelief, which was not entirely inaccurate. Luckily for her, I was actually telling the truth, and actually wanted to entice her rather than forcing her.

After all, I didn’t know just how long this struggle would take, and it was much easier to trust her if she was fighting for an amazing reward rather than being forced. Especially with the delicate nature of the task, I was going to assign to her.

“Good, I’m sure you noticed the little scuffle that was going on outside as those annoying flies decided to target my cute junior,” I said, then reached to caress her cheek, making her tremble with the sudden pleasure, the small trick I used letting her skin flare with pleasure.

“Yes, I did, sir,” she said, but didn’t comment further.

“That is giving me a bit of a problem. You see, I don’t want to intervene directly and show her my lack of trust, but I also don’t want her to fail.” I made a show of shuddering. “You see, I don’t want her to get sad.” She nodded. “That’s where you come in. You’re going to help her to the best of your abilities, and make sure the school doesn’t collapse under attack.”

She stood still for a moment, giving me a chance to continue before finally speaking. “And, since you said that you’ll give me an option, I’m assuming there’s a reward,” she said, softly yet confidently.

Just not confident enough to hide the fear she was feeling. Still, I was impressed. It was not as easy to actually challenge someone with such a power imbalance, and it was even harder to do so with the soft manner she had done.

Her political instincts were truly impeccable, which made me confident about the next task.

“I’ll have two tasks for you, and as a reward, I’ll have two rewards,” I said as I put my hand on her shoulder. “The first task is the simple one. I want you to stay in Silver Spires, and help my junior direct the defensive efforts, and the resettlement of the refugees,” I said.

“Refugees? What refugees?” she asked.

“There will be a general retreat, but it’ll probably take a while to be declared officially, but start preparing for it. As a princess, you have the reputation and required the ability to actually

command that many people,” I said.

“And the reward?” she asked.

“The thing you want,” I answered.

“The throne,” she murmured in fascination.

“Exactly, the lesser reward is the throne,” I said.

“L-lesser reward,” she stammered. Her emotions started from anger, which I didn’t take seriously considering my words could easily be taken as an insult to her family. Then, it clicked with her that, when someone as strong as I was displaying had the qualifications to position that. “And, what do I need to do for the greater reward?”

I looked toward the window with obvious distaste. “This place is infested with annoying cockroaches that are constantly troubling my junior, and management is not her forte. I want you to get rid of all those annoying bugs that feed information to others, no matter which organization. Guilds, other princes, royal family ... and most importantly, those annoyances that dare to call themselves Eternal, even if they spawn like frogs and die as easy as flies,” I said, deliberately letting my tone fill with emotion.

Yet, I deliberately showed annoyance rather than hate, showing that it was just the numbers that troubled me, and not the power they represented. It wasn’t true, of course, but the more the princess believed my power, the more committed she would be to proving herself.

“I can do that, but it would not be easy. I will make too many enemies,” she said, but this time, she didn’t mention a reward. Smart.

“Second reward is very simple. I’ll give you power enough to make it very problematic to actually exact revenge,” I said.

She looked at me, clearly unconvinced. But even as she opened her mouth, I leaned and captured her lips, flooding her body with mana.

For some of it, I used my simple trick and gave her as Experience. It was enough to make her eyes widen, as she was already at her modest level cap of six, which was particularly bad for someone in her position.

Of course, her abilities with the Darkness spark allowed her to compensate for that, but if there



was no need to compensate, things would have been much more different.

[-1380 Mana]

[+1 Tantric]

I didn't have the luxury to spend mana, but it had been a long while since I had been leveling up someone that weak, and the efficiency was simply impressive. In a moment, she had climbed to level ten, gaining four levels.

"I-impossible," she gasped as I pulled back.

"Oh, if you think that's impossible, I wonder what you'll say about this," I said as I leaned again, amused that, this time, she had jumped to meet me halfway. But this time, my mana didn't target the borders of the soul space, but the little corner that was hiding the Darkness Spark.

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[Level: 36 Experience: 631374 / 666000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 7334 / 7334 Mana: 7821 / 9000 ]

#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [115/140]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Twenty-Seven

The princess was enthusiastic enough for her tongue to invade my mouth aggressively, which was to be expected after she got a taste of the reward, and expecting even more leveling. Unfortunately, it was not what she would receive. Not because I wanted to ration my mana — as the regeneration helped me immensely on that aspect — but I had seen the risks of leveling too quickly.

While my method was not as barbaric as the Eternals had been using, it was still enough to make quick leveling a bit of danger. Her soul space needed to settle to make it safe.

Luckily for her, I had an even better reward. I reached a small internal storage, and pulled the little present I had picked from Mariel's room.

A little flicker of Darkness Spark, beautifully treated with Tantric.

[-450 Mana]

[+1 Tantric]

A gasp escaped her mouth as the Darkness touched her, which was much more strained than I expected. Luckily, I was aware that it was an experiment, and used a very limited amount.

I wondered whether it was the difference between an angel and a human that was the source of the difference, or it was the fact that Mariel had been much more aligned with the nature of the Divine Spark after carrying it with her for two centuries.

Either way, I clearly needed to make it more malleable. Luckily, it was the whole reason I was experimenting with her.

“Focus on the way you have been using your Divine Spark,” I ordered, curious whether the mindset would have any impact on it. I didn't do that with Mariel, but she was already strongly aligned with Light, making that redundant at best.

She tried to say something, but considering I had stolen her lips once again, the only thing she let out was a soft gasp. But I could imagine her trying to say my actions were not conducive to focusing on darkness.

I didn't care about the intensity of her success. At this point, I was more interested in understanding the nature of Divine Spark than empowering her — for empowerment, I had

easier options.

I just waited to see if the difficulty of the absorption process was changing.

Her mana started to cycle inside her. At first, it was smooth, but soon, she started to sieve her mana into her own Divine Spark reserves, letting it gain a shadowy quality while she tried to focus.

The result was not earth-shattering, but promising. As her mana started to gain Darkness nature, but not fully. In parallel, the difficulty of absorption started to reduce, but it was noticeable only because of my sharp senses. Maybe meditating for hours and days would have worked much more efficiently, but I didn't have the time to do that.

Luckily, I had my own cheat tool. I used Tantric to dilute the darkness effect more and more, until her body finally accepted it, the minuscule Darkness Spark melding into her quickly.

It wasn't a lot of Divine Spark, not enough to give her an actual power-up, which was nice since that was not my objective in the first place.

But, as a nice bonus, somehow it made an impact I hadn't been expecting. Not directly, but somehow, it worked like a skill, and the ease of using her own darkness multiplied several times.

Fascinating.

Too fascinating, even. If I didn't have the ability to examine her soul space to know the exact skills she had, I might have actually thought that it triggered a skill. The similarity, combined with my unique system's constant demand for Divine Spark, raised some interesting questions about the link between the Skills and Divine Spark.

Pity we were facing an emergency, which prevented me from whisking the princess to a three-day retreat filled with experimentation and debauchery.

"How's this as an advance payment," I said, acting like I hadn't simply multiplied her capabilities several times, making her a much more formidable and dangerous opponent.

"Enough to make sure I succeed," she whispered. And, considering she was already capable enough to grab the Crown Princess position strongly enough that other princes needed help from the Eternals to push her out — and failed to attain complete success even then — it was not hard to imagine what that power up meant in terms of effectiveness.

“Good, but since I don’t want to show my face around, let’s make sure you will succeed,” I said as I captured her lips once more. I didn’t want to spend more mana, but since I was facing such a convenient experimentation opportunity, I decided to do so.

Especially I could feel the small pull of the System, trying to absorb the Divine Spark her body absorbed.

I needed to solve that.

[-382 Mana]

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 1%]

[+2 Tantric]

Ordinarily, Companion Process wasn’t supposed to start with just a kiss, but at this point, I was capable enough to trick my own System by using trickery.

Amusingly, it still required a mental component, which I had achieved by pushing her toward the

Yet, the results were on the negative side of my expectations. It slowed down the absorption, but only because it was generating a reverse pull. Still, while I was unhappy with the result, I wasn’t surprised by it.

Not when my system had been subtly blackmailing me for more and more Divine Spark.

Yet, that didn’t mean it couldn’t be used for my benefit.

First, I reached that companion node, and absorbed it back. Then, I flared my mana even as I let my own Divine Spark take its place as we kissed.

[-1280 Mana]

[Companion Acquisition: Progress 25%]

I didn’t receive any notification of experience gain or stage completion, but considering I had been using my own Divine Spark, it wasn’t shocking. However, while I didn’t care about my own experience, I was slightly frustrated by the lack of achievement at the Princess.

Yet, the benefit of it was clear. The companion node was still pulling the Divine Spark toward

itself, but with a lesser intensity. And, when it brushed against the node, it bounced back.

It was another advantage of creating the node myself. I was able to create an inverted storage around, blocking it from actually absorbing the Divine Spark, while still pulling enough to prevent the System from absorbing.

It wasn't the most elegant solution, but it worked well, which was all I could hope for at that point. I pushed another sliver of Darkness Spark inside her, noting the absorption process. It still took a great deal of Tantric cleansing, but a sliver less than the earlier attempt.

A piece of evidence toward the existing Divine Spark helping assimilation, but ultimately, not conclusive, requiring much more experimentation.

When I pulled back, her eyes were wide in shock, easily distinguishing the smoothness of her darkness mana flowing with surprising smoothness.

"I'm sure you can feel the improvement in your capabilities," I whispered as I pulled back. Earlier, she was barely able to maintain two puppets, but I was confident that, after my improvements, three wouldn't be out of the question, maybe even more if she could use her increased flexibility as an advantage.

"Yes," she said, trying to sound confident, but unable to suppress the fascination in her tone.

"Don't forget I expect a good performance. I won't be happy if I find myself forced to act," I said as I pulled back. It was another subtle trick, it worked as a threat, but also a promise. I was implying that I would punish her if she failed, but I was also saying that I was ready to intervene openly if things got too bad.

Which conveniently removed the dilemma of a possible last stand and the merits of an early retreat from her. Why would she retreat even if the worst outcome of staying was better than retreating.

It was not true, of course, as I was weaker than what I had been reflecting her, but I didn't feel bad about that, after she made the choice of doing the same to Silver Spires, involving the school with her political realities.

Also, she was a politician. Lies were basically foreplay for them.

Looking at her, still trying to catch her breath after our latest kiss, I was tempted to lean forward once more, but delaying my arrival at the border was not a good idea. I didn't battle to

start immediately, but it was not a bet I was willing to take.

I disappeared from the room with an illusion trick before leaving the school, hoping the princess wouldn't waste the trust I had laid in her...

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[Level: 36 Experience: 631374 / 666000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 7334 / 7334 Mana: 7126 / 9000 ]

#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [118/140]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]



## Chapter Two Hundred Twenty-Eight

I didn't bother hiding as I summoned a fake air elemental, not too far from the school. It looked counter-intuitive to do so while the enemy this time was clearly doing their best to pull the forces outside the school.

[-2190 Mana]

Otherwise, they wouldn't have started attacking the towns farthest away from the school. Even the involvement of their spies preventing the guard force from gathering supported that, despite looking contrary to it at the first glance.

I spent quite a bit of mana on the construct, more than necessary, giving the spies the impression that I prioritized speed over anything else.

And if they believed that I was already suffering from a lack of mana after such spending and it was a good opportunity to ambush me, it was even better. A miscalculated ambush was often more dangerous than a direct battle.

A strategy that I expected them to launch at some point. Especially since their aim was to clearly render the guard force unable to send out a functional expedition, which would force the headmistress to send her elite forces instead.

Forces like a mysterious mage that singlehandedly prevented Zokras' invasion.

It was the reason I made a spectacle out of my departure. I wanted the spies to inform the mysterious enemy that the first stage of their plan was a success, so that the enemy would reason the first stage of their plan was a success.

The only problem, I didn't know what would be their next move. If I were them, I would have attacked the school directly without bothering the peripheral attacks, but the problem was I had no idea of their priorities. I only knew they wanted to target Mariel and Janelor ultimately, but I had no idea other than that.

I still left the school, because I was ready to return. I had prepared three hidden teleportation arrays I could use to return — which was not permanent, but would last for a few days — and both Janelor and Mariel had magical means to communicate with me in case of an emergency.

Not to mention, I set Oeyne as the bodyguard, and the companion node she had would work wonders to alert me if she fell into danger.

And the same applied to Titania and Marianne, as well as Helga and Cornelia, their proximity giving me a useful teleportation destination in case their target wasn't limited to current warriors stuck at the school.

I continued moving toward the destination, but not without another little detour. Rather than pushing directly, I moved in a spiral for a while, casting a wide number of detection spells to see if there was any buried surprise near the school.

I still remembered the buried undead armies that had been prepared as the last step of a deadly trip, one that would have been enough to force Mariel between defending the school and letting it fall — which would have been a dangerous choice with the struggles she had been having with Divine Spark at that time.

I shook my head after three spirals and started moving toward my destination directly, wondering whether they didn't bother setting a similar trap, or they prepared one but managed to hide it well enough to keep it away from my attention.

Risky, but I decided to trust Mariel after the great boost she received as she started to sublime her Divine Spark, especially with all the hidden cards I arranged for her — both Janelor and the Princess.

Not to mention I could already feel the girls moving back to Silver Spires, giving her another impressive weaponry she could raise.

She had all the weapons she needed to resist anything less than the full force of the Eternals — a full force that I certainly didn't expect to come at this point. After all, why would Eternals push forward aggressively when they had the perfect tools to maintain their position.

But, soon I realized that assumption wasn't correct.

Pity that little lack of information was reached in the form of a huge, oppressive ward with a rotating structure, locking me in place.

A familiar ward structure, one that I remembered vividly from Mount Doom, when I worked hard to save Janelor.

"Okay, I might have miscalculated," I murmured even as I checked my mana.

Mana: 8422 / 9000 ]

Luckily, it was already mostly recovered, enough to give me a fighting chance. More than enough to punch through the wards, especially since it was only the blocking ward I could feel, and not the detection ward that had been accompanying it earlier.

Unfortunately, rushing toward the wall and breaking out was not an option, not with the presence I could feel all around me, their mana flaring to show their willingness to fight, their numbers as impressive as the strength they displayed.

“Not a great prediction,” I murmured even as I pulled my sword, waiting for them to get closer even as I tried to come up with a way to escape. The presence of the fake elemental was nice, giving me the necessary mobility, but I wasn’t willing to rush toward the edge.

Despite being confident that I could break the wards faster than they could hit me, I waited for them to approach.

I needed to understand why they were targeting me, which I had no idea about.

Or, more accurately, I had many ideas. They could be targeting me for a myriad of reasons. Maybe revenge, as they had many reasons to hate me. I had destroyed their plans with Zokras and apparently killed him, I saved Janelor from their ploys, I intervened with their plans with the Empire by saving and empowering the princess, and I directly assassinated their members.

Together, they created compelling reasons to make me pay, but the problem was most of those were supposed to be hidden, with no way to trace them back to me.

But revenge wasn’t the only reason to target me. If they got a true sense of my capabilities and my growth trajectory it would make sense for them to target me as well. Just my incredible leveling speed might be enough to mark me as an anomaly.

Yet, it wouldn’t be enough for them to target me considering their own capabilities. But my ability to level up others, without suffering from the obvious horrible side effects they had been dealing with in terms of going berserk, was a different story.

And, I realized despondently as my opponents flew closer, not impossible to deduce if one explored the great change in Helga and Marianne.

Of course, there was also the biggest reason, the true nature of Tantric and its capabilities on Divine Spark, but I hoped that wasn’t the case. Because the others marked me as a target of interest...

While that one marked me as a great trouble, one that needed to be either controlled or destroyed.

Ironically, I didn't expect that last one to be the case, because of their limited assault — even though terming an unbreakable ward and dozens of high-leveled combatants, each strong enough to be an absolute overlord outside as limited was ridiculous.

But everything I learned about the Eternals suggested that it didn't even count as a true response from their true forces.

And I was confident that freely manipulating Divine Spark certainly earned a greater response from them.

Still, even a minuscule response was dangerous, as I was the target. I could escape successfully, but it would be nothing but highlight me as an even greater threat against Eternals, to be hunted down with their full force.

A force that I certainly didn't want to face at its full potential.

But fighting and defeating them was hardly better. It would awaken an even stronger response, though there was one great advantage, as it would keep my full strength a mystery for the moment, making them hesitant.

As the auras came closer, I faced a dangerous choice...

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[Level: 36 Experience: 631374 / 666000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 7334 / 7334 Mana: 8753 / 9000 ]

## SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [118/140]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [85/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

## PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

## Chapter Two Hundred Twenty-Nine

Fight or flight, those were my hard-to-choose options, I found myself thinking even as I turned my attention to my closest enemy, a warrior decked in full armor, carrying an ax larger than himself, running toward me with a shocking speed.

A speed that was impossible for me to replicate even with my admittedly incredible stats.

Yet, as he got close enough to avoid the overwhelming presence of the wards, enough to get me a sense of his mana. It was still too far away to actually get a glimpse of his soul space, nor I wanted to spend the necessary mana to break through at such great distance — especially since I wasn't confident in keeping that hidden — but the sensation of his mana left no doubt about the state of his soul space.

It was a raging disaster, almost like a beast. He was not berserk, like the other recruits I watched while I was saving Janelor, but he wasn't too far away from getting that point either.

At a distance, I could see two other warriors, their status not particularly superior as they rushed forward, marginally slower.

Their rush was desperate, lacking any kind of coordination, which contrasted greatly with the excellent timing of the initial ward.

"Fight, it is," I murmured as I watched their reckless assault. The ambush required a certain amount of planning, which was impossible to be delivered by the three I could see. I didn't want to try to escape, only to be blocked completely.

There was always teleportation as the last resort, especially since I was confident enough to punch through the wards blocking it — but that was literally my last card. If they didn't know I could teleport, I didn't want to reveal it, and if they actually discovered it — as I used it against the undead — I didn't want to use it before making sure they didn't have a strategy against it.

Either way. I preferred to keep it hidden for now.

As soon as the first warrior moved within my effective casting range, I cast a wall of fire to block his path. Not the strongest or most damaging spell, but damaging enough as an opening spell, flashy enough to look impressive, without spending much mana.

[-181 Mana]

The warrior swung his ax, the resulting wind destroying the ward easily, resulting from the weapon he was carrying flaring with magic. His chaotic mana wasn't enough to activate such a trick — as his stats were clearly focused on the physical side — but the handle of the ax was glistening with a shocking number of Eternal Gems, giving a good idea about the power source.

The Eternals were certainly rich, I noted, remembering how happy I was when I acquired a few, a treasure that I was yet to use.

I was impressed by their richness, but not enough to let the warrior approach freely. I responded with another elemental spell, this time a rain of icicles, rushing through the air.

[-130 Mana]

Another weak spell, but surprisingly damaging against a single target as the icicles were perfectly shaped thanks to my extraordinary control and constant practice — not to mention, replicating a rotating effect to enhance damage.

The disadvantage, it was easy to dodge, and even easier to block. All my attacker needed was to take a step back to avoid the trajectory. He certainly had the speed to do it.

Yet, the only thing he did was raise his ax to protect his face, letting the ice rain on his armor without skipping a step. "Maybe he misread the spell," I wondered even as I waved my hand again, sending another, stronger wave of ice.

[-310 Mana]

Yet, he repeated the same move, ignoring the destruction of the armor and his own blood. His berserk status was not limited to his mana state.

Ironically, that reckless assault, which would have been an amazing development against a weaker candidate, made it harder to fight against them. It would have been easier fighting against a berserk warrior if he was alone, but the other two were about to join, and I could feel more than a dozen following.

And there were still nearer to the ward, but the interference of the ward prevented me from detecting it.

If they were perfectly rational, I could have controlled their attack by showing my ability to destroy the initial attackers, forcing the rest to consider it slowly. It would have given me the time I needed to regenerate mana.

Unfortunately, that strategy was ineffective against a bunch of berserkers.

Of course, their recklessness and their clear willingness to take damage opened many other ways to deal with them — but it would require me to both spend a lot of mana, and reveal a lot of my magical tricks.

Tricks that I needed against whoever would follow the first wave.

“Melee it is,” I murmured as I draw my sword, ready to meet with the attacker physically despite his physical superiority. I rather reveal my physical abilities than my magical abilities this early into what was clearly a siege.

The moment he arrived in front of me, his ax swung with a shocking speed, one that I would have no chance of reacting to if I tried to react to his speed.

But that didn't apply to reading him. Before the ax could cover the distance halfway, my sword was already on its path, covered with earth mana to enhance its endurance. Even then, I didn't dare to meet his swing halfway, and parried carefully.

Yet, with his full weight behind the swing, the soft parry was enough to imbalance him, giving me an easy stab through his eye, pushing the blade hard enough to dig into his eye, but before I could push in fully, a kick hit my chest, pushing me away.

[-13 HP]

The elemental I had been riding showed its advantage, as a mental order was enough to pull me back, preventing the damage from a kick that would have killed a level fifteen warrior with one touch.

All the while making it look like I had received substantial damage — one that I reinforced by using Biomancy to show my HP depleting — to give the impression that their plan was working.

Unfortunately, while a sword halfway into his skull would have been enough to kill almost anyone, a warrior in his high thirties — or maybe even forties — with some monstrous stats to support, was one of those rare exceptions.

His HP energy rushed to the wound, quickly reducing the blood loss as the wound disappeared, though the eye stayed destroyed.

Even at that level, HP had its limitations without healing spells to assist.



Yet, the loss of an eye didn't delay him more than a second as he rushed forward, his ax cutting through the air once more, forcing my prediction to the limit as I parried once again, delivering another counter-attack that would have been deadly for a weaker opponent.

I wasn't surprised that my opponent didn't fall after my move, as even if they didn't have any additional trick, I calculated his HP to be well over ten thousand, likely breaching twenty thousand.

It required more than a couple well-placed sword hits to actually die, probably in the range of dozens, maybe even hundreds. I wasn't annoyed by it, as if I truly wanted to kill the reckless warrior with no apparent magical defenses, I had better options.

Such as tricking him into a ward to lock his movement, and bombarding him with fire spells.

Or, if I was feeling particularly merciless, using Necrotic energy.

If there was one benefit to my confrontation with Zokras, that it taught me how fragile was HP against necrotic energy. Even those little pesky liches were enough to destroy hundreds of HP with one hit. And while they wouldn't have the same effect against the man in front of me due to his stronger Endurance...

I wasn't as weak as them either.

Yet, it wasn't just the disgusting sensation of copying that energy that prevented me from relying on that. I didn't want to reveal my trump cards that easily.

His HP might not be a real barrier, but I still made a show of disbelief while leveraging my Subterfuge to the limit. "How are you still alive," I gasped in disbelief, showing any potential observer that I was far from truly understanding what I was facing.

Yet, before I could deliver another stab, the other two caught up to us, and joined the attack. They didn't coordinate at all, showing that they lacked even the instinctual battle sense of beasts. I didn't need to check their soul spaces to know that they were about to go completely berserk.

Unfortunately, with their abilities, their lack of coordination didn't matter as much as I would have liked, especially with their recklessness that made them perfectly willing to take damage to deliver one in turn.

Even with my perception and martial abilities pushed to the limit, I was overwhelmed quickly,

and forced to rely on the mobility of the air elemental to avoid the bulk of the damage, though I still received some simple wounds

[-84 HP]

Wounds that I exaggerated in appearance with an unusual application of healing magic to give the impression that I was already pushed to the limit, hoping that it would allow revealing whoever was responsible for the ambush.

But, whoever they were, they stayed silent even as the other warriors reached me, their numbers reaching half a dozen.

It was time to push the situation a notch.

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[Level: 36 Experience: 631374 / 666000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 7153 / 7334 Mana: 8284 / 9000 ]

#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [118/140]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

# Chapter Two Hundred Thirty

However, before cutting loose, I first wanted to make sure I had an actual observer.

Luckily, the increasing number of warriors gave me the excuse to make a 'mistake'. One of the new warriors charged from behind while I was busy parrying the ax of the first warrior, 'failing' to notice his presence until too late.

I jumped off the air elemental to avoid him, but that only made me lose my mobility while I rolled on the ground, making the six surround me.

"No," I shouted desperately, with a beautiful acting that would have earned me a leading role in a theater troupe even as I pointed toward my fake elemental mount.

[-182 Mana]

I didn't spend much mana, but with all of the elemental mana already in the structure of my mount, the results were still truly spectacular. A storm exploded, dispersing the ones that surrounded me like the leaves in the wind.

I wasn't an exception.

[-72 HP]

Rolling on the ground was not a pleasant feeling, though the damage it created was little more than a mosquito bite for me. Of course, the same applied to my enemies as well, showing they received a negligible damage and a temporary mobility effect.

What a waste of three thousand mana I sank into creating that elemental.

Luckily, damaging them was not my aim was in the first place. The reckless explosion was just an excuse to disperse my mana, and three thousand mana was enough to create an ever-expanding circle until it reached the barrier.

Enough to turn it into a detection spell as I maintained my connection.

Yet, the result was enough to put a frown in my face. I sensed almost another two dozen warriors rushing toward me, and another dozen that felt like mages were already closing in from south.

They were really prepared to take me down.

Yet, the presence of that impressive army didn't alarm me what I felt from Northeast side. Or, more accurately, what I didn't feel.

There was absolutely no feedback, like my mana suddenly disappeared. It wasn't that they were strong, as the other dozen mages had the sufficient strength to accomplish that as well.

But they didn't care about that, uncaring of the outcome, while the unknown at the Northeast didn't share their lack of concern, suggesting something more than a near-berserk warrior.

I couldn't help but frown even as I started building the initial nodes of a defensive ward. It was clearly a trap to push myself to my limits, and I needed the time given to me by the wards.

I needed to decide which abilities to reveal first, and I needed to see if I could save myself without confronting the others. I hoped that, if I could display a sufficient level of ordinary ability, they might decide that I was harmless.

Was that likely? Certainly not, but compared to revealing my more dangerous abilities, like teleportation, it was still the better option — at least, as far as I could contemplate while constructing a ward that could temporarily hold back two dozen warriors around level forty.

Even the speed of thinking boosted by Intelligence and Wisdom had its limits.

The first warrior had already arrived at the edge when I managed to establish the first layer of the ward, and it was the same warrior that initially charged forward, putting his speed advantage to great use.

Since the environment was already blanketed with my mana, I decided to take a risk and reach to his soul space, though I kept the mana stab very weak.

[-9 Mana]

Only to be rebuffed, finding their soul space protected. Maybe I should have been surprised too much by the result, as I knew for a fact the Eternals were aware of the full potential of Soul Space. It only made sense for them to try and protect it.

I ignored that, and focused on the dangers of his immediate rush, and its dangerous tactical implications.

Or, from a strategic view, a terrible use, as it once again left him alone without support, though

that didn't change the fact that every swing of his ax was damaging the ward greatly.

I was considering the best way to handle him when my gaze fell down to his weapon, its handle filled with Eternal gems.

Delivering me the perfect excuse to set up a truly impressive ward.

He swung his ax once more, hitting the ward squarely, breaking through its protection with a single solid attack as I stopped shifting the ward to minimize the damage. Yet, as he toppled forward, he didn't expect the ward to close on him, immobilizing it.

Meanwhile, I flared my mana once more, enhancing my sword to the limit with earth mana well past its limit, enough to ruin it completely.

[-1307 Mana]

Yet, it gave me one empowered swing, which resulted in a devastating effect with my opponent's overextended state.

When he pulled back, he didn't have any arm.

I smirked as I kicked his arms away, and grabbed my real target, his ax. I let my mana invade the ax, giving myself a second to examine the weapon, expecting it to be the most exquisite weapon I had ever touched.

[+5 Craft ]

It was wondrous, the complicated yet robust at the same time, showing many enhancements that was actually above my current capability to even understand, let alone actually replicate.

At least not without months and months of effort.

It was filled with many intricate abilities that made it a legitimate threat against me if it had been used by someone that used it as a club — which was an exaggeration, I admitted, as while my enemy was berserk, he still had enhancement of at least one legendary skill.

But without strategic thought behind to leverage some of the situational abilities hidden in its structure, it wasn't enough to truly threaten me.

Amusingly, I still felt that it was somehow lesser than Aviada's sword, which was rather interesting. Unfortunately, since I had been lacking Craft when I last used that sword, I wasn't

sure whether it was the fault of my memories.

I would have loved to spend days examining intricacies of the weapon, confident that it would bring me to a new height of understanding with craft.

Which was the reason of my feelings of pity as I destroyed it with a flare my mana, dislodging all the Eternal gems studded along its structure. Destruction was always easier than creation, especially when it came to such a weapon.

[+10 Craft]

The great boost to a master level skill it generated just by dismantling it showed the true intricacy of the weapon, which made its eventual fate an even bigger pity.

As I destroyed it, I felt a flare of mana at the Northeast, one that carried tinges of anger, which contrasted interestingly with the non-reaction when I managed to cut the arms of his soldier. His sense of priorities was rather interesting.

Of course, it wasn't a huge reaction, one that I could never feel if it wasn't for my mana, still dispersed along the field covered by the ward, giving me superior detection.

I wished that I had the time to focus enjoying my mysterious ambusher's misfortune, but I had a more important thing to focus on first.

The ward around me. I was reluctant to push for a more defensive strategy, but I noticed my attackers slowing down after the initial burst of anger I felt from the distance, showing sudden signs of organization.

I didn't need to wonder about the reason, as I could feel the subtle connection extending from the Northeast.

Breaking the weapon was clearly a bigger deal than I had expected.

As I started constructing the first ward over the initial protective layer I created, I paid attention to the unlucky warrior with no arms, expecting him to join the rest. Although he had been harmed greatly, he just required the assistance of a healer to join the battle fresh.

Yet, he didn't join, as there was no thread of mana toward him. I wondered whether my mysterious enemy just wrote him off.

Or maybe, I thought as I turned to the distance, and noticing the mana strings didn't connect

directly to the warrior but their weapons instead, he had a different reason for that anger.

I decided to pull another trick, and took the risk of reaching to the soul space of the unfortunate warrior.

I didn't find anything I didn't expect. His soul space was strong, filled with many achievements, and skills, all exclusively focused on melee combat, but the thing that took most attention was the borders of his soul space.

Tethering on the edge of a ruin, about to collapse, and actively degrading, showing that the weapon was not just protecting the soul space, but possibly healing.

No wonder my mysterious enemy didn't care even the slightest about their lives. If left unattended, it was inevitable for their border to crack in a few months, if not in several days. And, everything I had seen from them suggested that they lacked the ability to repair it.

I wondered if they suspected my ability to repair it, but I let that doubt fade.

The situation in front me showed that it was a great problem for them, and I doubted that they would send such a small force — though even thinking them as small gave me a sensation of abandon — if they even suspected that part.

Which made my next move risky, but I needed every second I could get under the situation.

[-16 Mana]

With his attention weakened, and bereft of the protection of his weapon, it was easy to for me to give the necessary push to hasten the inevitable collapse, triggering his berserk.

And, with my ward reducing my presence, he rushed toward his previous allies to distract them.

Giving me the precious seconds I needed to establish my ward.

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[Level: 36 Experience: 631374 / 666000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42



Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 7022 / 7334 Mana: 7631 / 9000 ]

#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [118/140]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

# Chapter Two Hundred Thirty-One

I had never felt such an intensity of pressure while setting up a ward, not even back in the days I was still weak, saving Titania from a dangerous necromancer ambush, or the time I had to go and reinforce Cornelia and Helga during the sudden undead ambush.

During the time I saved Titania, I was the hunter, giving me the freedom to strategize however I wished, in a sense, making it even a relaxed affair.

And, while saving Cornelia and Helga had been a much more tense affair, bringing me closer to death than I had ever thought possible until that time, at least I wasn't in a position to hide my abilities.

Here, it was the worst of both worlds. Not only I was in a dangerous situation, facing a threat that was likely enough to overwhelm me, but also I had to pick and choose which ability I could use, afraid of revealing the wrong thing — all without not even knowing what my mysterious enemy was searching for in the first place.

The difficulty of the ward I was setting up didn't help anyway.

From a purely technical perspective, it was not a ward, but a combination of a ward and a weapon. I used my mana to put the destroyed material of the ax to good use, the unknown metal flexing easily under my intense magic flow and creating two intersecting circles around me, and ten of the Eternal gems I had just acquired went there, embedding themselves into the structure.

Of course, even for that great number of Eternal gems, the amount of mana they could provide had limits, but it was still measured in thousands. More importantly, the interference they generated was enough for me to use my own mana secretly to support the structure without raising questions about my dangerous mana regeneration.

[-2890 Mana]

Under the great flood of mana, some external and some internal, the ward started to take shape. The great construction, appearing layer by layer, taxing my mental abilities to the limit as I applied every single trick I collected to optimize its impact.

Even then, the recent boost in Craft had been terribly critical in ensuring everything worked as it was supposed to.

It was exhausting, but I couldn't afford to pull back on that aspect, not when the attackers were already finished dealing with the berserk warrior, taking him down in a few seconds. But, it was still enough to ruin their formation, giving me several precious seconds as they gathered into a formation, and started moving forward.

More than twenty warriors, supported by half as many mages. Ignoring them took a lot of effort, but watching them approach was less important than finishing the ward.

As the inner structure solidified, a mana connection with the remaining four stones appeared, each radiating with pure mana, ready to transform into whatever nature I wished.

Just in time, as the first rain of magical attack hit me, courtesy of the mages hidden behind the formation. Four floating spheres around me danced rapidly to meet the rain of fire and lightning, intense enough to destroy a city.

Controlling four floating mana spheres independently was not difficult, even for a novice mage.

Controlling four floating mana spheres tightly packed with rotating mana, acting as a vortex was harder, but it could still be done easily without assistance. I could have done so easily even without the gems to stabilize their structure.

The real challenge started when the first spell hit, a fireball, the vortex immediately devouring it and taking it to the core, pressuring the foreign mana until it lost its attacking nature, turning it back to its stable state.

Though it was still elemental mana, which made it very difficult to control and contain.

Containing that mana was the main reason I had gone through that crazy design. It was not only a defensive tool, but it also empowered my abilities to counter-attack.

I was still tempted to teleport out, but I didn't dare to do so without getting a better idea of what my enemy was searching for. Only then, I could accidentally reveal my true secret — one that didn't require them to chase me at full strength.

Of course, I doubted that, even if succeeded in that, they would just stop chasing me, but I doubted someone that strong only had me as a concern. I had many ways to escape easily as long as I was treated as a nuisance.

I wasn't as confident in hiding if they actually wanted to chase me, especially if the next time, they didn't come with the dregs of their organization.

Another spell rushed toward me, this time a huge wave of water threatening to devour me, but before it could reach halfway, another orb rushed forward and cut through the center of the spell, absorbing enough mana to destabilize its structure, but before I could even finish that, other spells rained over me, forcing me to use all four rotating balls of mana at the same time.

Against another mage, it would have been impossible to succeed. Even as I used the orbs to absorb their attacks, I could come up with dozens of ways to destroy my own arrangements. Hitting one of those orbs with a sharp, armor-piercing would have half of the job by disrupting its movement, making it temporarily useless.

A few more, and I would deal with an explosion worse than what my enemies throwing forward.

But my magical attackers were no different than the warriors, showing that their near-berserk state was enough to wipe whatever benefit given to them by their stats. They just rained their spells recklessly while they closed together with the warriors.

Even more beautifully, they restricted themselves to four elements, which, under the simplest look, was the correct move. They were the most destructive ones, and shockingly effective against wards, in a way that couldn't be replicated by Arcana spells or other disciplines.

Yet, it only made it easier for me to handle it. I targeted each type of element with one orb, making sure each orb only contained one type of energy.

I remember the violent results of mixing different types of energies, and I certainly didn't try to replicate it. If they had used different types of energies, I would be facing the option of letting them score a hit, pushing another gem from the inner ward matrix to create a fifth external node, or letting out the energies hidden in one of the nodes to keep it empty, using it to deflect multiple types of energies.

And none of those options was preferable. The first would bring unnecessary damage to the inner structure, and while it was inevitable, I didn't want to start receiving damage, especially since its main objective was to resist the melee damage represented by the warriors, one that would turn into a trap if everything went well.

The second option was equally unpleasant. The inner nodes were there to help me to contain the pressure of the external orbs as the mana they contained grew more and more. Trying to balance more orbs with fewer focal nodes to support would make it more difficult.

Just like juggling, adding another element made it exponentially difficult.

Technically, third was the most tenable option, but it would not only make me waste all the mana I stole, but also risked to alert my mysterious enemy about the true nature of the trick.

I wanted them to believe that my stance was a reckless last stand of a hopeless man, not a dangerous trap.

They moved forward steadily, seconds turning into minutes with no change in their pattern as they continued to rain spells, their pace slightly faster than walking, though they were barely more than soft silhouettes with all the dust and smoke filling my surroundings as the siege continued, the pressure increasing as the mana hidden in the orbs increased.

Yet, even as time passed, there was no change in their pattern as they continued to rain their spells. I felt something warm dripping down. For a moment, I thought it to be sweat, but the iron taste that accompanied it showed that it was not the case.

It was blood.

[-47 HP]

Things had been getting overwhelming. In each orb, the amount of mana that was hidden was more than ten thousand points, and not by a small margin.

A number that was significantly greater than my own reserves, and I was trying to contain that without the assistance of the System. Some, I already absorbed back into my reserves to fill, but the amount was still incredible.

“How much mana do they have?” I found myself murmuring. My own technique of destroying their spells was far from perfect. I would be lucky if I was able to get five percent of the mana they had invested, while the rest was dispersing, consumed by the spell effect after the core of the spell was destroyed by the orb.

Meaning, they had already wasted more than five hundred thousand mana! It had great implications for their mana capacity and mana regeneration, yet, even as the pressure reached an overwhelming degree, I couldn't help but focus on one thing.

What a waste!

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[Level: 36 Experience: 631374 / 666000]

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6982 / 7334 Mana: 9000 / 9000 ]

#### SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [118/140]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

#### PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

#### COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]



## Chapter Two Hundred Thirty-Two

I continued to defend against endless rain of spells, blood continuing to stem down my nose as the challenge of containing the mana I stole started to get overwhelming. I had both the mana and the skill necessary to cure myself, but I couldn't spare the attention.

Not when the squad was still approaching steadily, close enough for the distance to be measured in feet, the warriors standing in a formation to protect the mages. Ordinarily, the presence of the warriors would mean little in a mage battle — courtesy of area-effect or other indirect spells.

But things were different with their weapons more than capable of destroying spells, and their incredible HP reserves made it impossible to take down with stray spells and ordinary tricks.

And then, they arrived at the border, one of them, armed with a long spear — its haft once again studded with enough eternal gems to trigger a world war, supporting the weapon with enough mana to rival my regeneration — probed forward.

The floating orbs ignored him, still busy trying to block the spells of the mages that were raining without a pause. The tip of the spear hit the ward, but that was the extent of his probing, pulling immediately, trying to protect themselves against a possible trap.

Yet, even that casual probing was enough to damage the ward that required hundreds of mana to fix. I did so, making it look like it cost me a dangerous portion of my reserves, while I just used some of the mana I stole from their spells, actually reducing the pressure I was feeling.

But, the mysterious enemy still didn't act, nor he acted in a way that would kill me. The spells that the mages were throwing around were extremely strong, but at this point, it was clear that they were not working.

I could come up with a hundred better formations to actually kill me, but the current pattern was perfect for increasing the pressure I was feeling.

Especially that, rather than attacking directly, the warriors surrounded me in a circle, with the mages behind them, creating incredible pressure...

The mysterious enemy still stayed hidden, letting me feel the pressure of his deadly tactics, yet to reveal his true objective, content in keeping me in deadly danger.

Whatever he wanted to see, he was yet to see it, which meant it was not about my magical

capabilities. That aspect didn't surprise me much, as even the ward they used to trap me showed that they had resources and capabilities that could easily eclipse me.

I decided to lean on it more to anger him, in a way that would pull his attention away from Silver Spires. Luckily, I had an excellent scapegoat for this, one that had already gone through a lot of trouble to avoid the attention of the Eternals.

Zokras, the unlucky lich.

"Enough. I can't believe I have to abandon this identity because of a bunch of rabid dogs," I shouted as I reached to my own mana, and used my own mana to replicate the undead energy, letting it dance over my skin, even as I cast an illusion.

[-1306 Mana]

[-481 HP]

The pain was bad, but not impossible to resist. The important part was to make the trick look convincing, and I was aware that my mysterious enemy was simple. I let the necrotic energy infuse my body.

Yet, the enemy stayed silent.

So be it, I thought even as I reached one of the four nodes, and transformed into necrotic energy, followed by a smirk.

I finally felt a movement in the Northeast direction. Necrotic energy was truly the bane of living creatures, and HP was not a good barrier. That much necrotic energy was enough to cause a threat.

And the reaction was intense, coming in the form of a huge spell, one of familiar energy.

It was a spear of light, with an intensity that Titania couldn't hope to match even in her wildest dreams. Even Mariel would fail to match that despite the recent help I had given her to assimilate her Divine Spark.

The spell was enough to give me a good guess of what had triggered the sudden ambush. They were clearly observing her more closely than I had been expecting, enough that her sublimation of Divine Spark was enough to trigger a great trap.

Yet, I was clearly just a suspect, and they weren't sure whether I was responsible for it. If they

knew for certain, they wouldn't have worked so hard to bait me.

The instant spell was enough to show me that the enemy was strong. Far stronger than me, and not just in pure power — as it would hardly be something new, every single enemy I was fighting against had enough raw power to eclipse me — but also in control and application.

It was time to retreat, I decided, preparing myself to teleport. But, I needed a ward to protect myself first, and my enemy was kind enough to give me the necessary tools to do so.

His spell was fast, and under normal conditions, it would have arrived to me before I could cast a spell. Transforming the nature of more than ten thousand points of mana was not a quick affair even when that mana was in my reserves, ready to be used. Outside, it was even slower.

But I had Tantric, which helped me to transform nature much more easily by increasing the malleability of mana, and the mysterious enemy was sufficiently away that even a spear of light was not instantaneous.

Their attempts to stay hidden were not without their cost.

The necrotic energy exploded, delivering a dangerous amount of damage to every single one. Since it was not a targeted spell but an intense flood of energy, their ability to block didn't work as well, especially since the mages didn't react in time.

Yet, against them, even that was not enough to kill them, or even wound them seriously.

But it was enough to give me an opportunity as they pulled back. I focused on the warriors even as I directed the now empty rotating mana toward the spear of light, using it to block it, sacrificing the node in the process, triggering a great explosion.

I didn't even try absorbing it, as it was a trick that was only possible because of the ineptitude of the other mages, using extremely simple spells, their structure obvious for my gaze, allowing me to identify the correct point to destabilize it.

Against the spear, even destabilizing it enough that it self-destructed was a great achievement, though the cost was equally steep.

An eternal gem.

Just like the mysterious enemy was mocking my achievement, he cast another spell, this time sending fourteen spears of light at the same time, with the same ease, showing that he was yet

to show his true capabilities.

Luckily, the thirteen eternal gems in my possession were not the only ones I could get. After all, they weren't the only ones that were hiding their capabilities, and I wasn't stupid enough to let them surround me without an ulterior motive.

I reached for the second orb, transforming the mana into necrotic energy as well, but this time targeting the hands of the mages, who were too distracted to resist.

The mages weren't weak, but they also didn't have the endless HP of the warriors. And, with the warriors still distracted by the pain of the necrotic energy. Especially I directed some of it to their soul space, the conflict against the barrier that protected their soul space strong enough to disable them in pain for a second.

A second without their protection was all I needed to deal with the mages, their HP was nothing against necrotic energy, once again reminding me that it was not without reason necromancers were hunted the moment they were detected.

The protection of HP was nothing against it.

"No!" came a monstrous shout, one that reminded me of a monster, though distinctly male, though what scared me was the energy that accompanied it. It was a fiery energy, hard to describe, destroying everything in its path.

It reminded me of light, and fire, but even at a distance, I could feel that it was only a superficial similarity, not something true.

Yet, his anger was unmistakable. It was not anger that come from a loss, but came of warning. He wasn't in despair because I killed ten of his soldiers, but what would follow.

At this point, I wasn't interested in his threats. His strength was enough that I had to run away from Silver Spires for a long time, and my show of necrotic energy was hopefully enough to mark me as a spy rather than a member.

I could only hope that it would be enough to keep him away from targeting the school in revenge — especially since he was hesitant for some reason.

I ignored the threat in his tone as I tapped into the ball of energy once more, once again using the external energy for my objectives.

Enough to target ten weapons at the same time, disassembling them in an instant. With hundreds of eternal gems under my control, sacrificing thirteen of them was not a big deal. Especially since I still had exactly twenty-three untouched weapons, each promising me at least ten eternal gems.

The angry shout of my enemy was beautiful, I thought, but the satisfaction didn't last long.

This time, it didn't come in the form of a distant attack, but a familiar distortion.

Teleportation.

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[Level: 36 Experience: 631374 / 666000

Strength: 46 Charisma: 63

Precision: 40 Perception: 42

Agility: 40 Manipulation: 45

Speed: 39 Intelligence: 49

Endurance: 39 Wisdom: 51

HP: 6982 / 7334 Mana: 9000 / 9000 ]

SKILLS

Grandmaster Tantric [118/140]

Master Melee [100/100]

Master Biomancy [100/100]

Master Elemental [100/100]

Master Arcana [100/100]

Master Subterfuge [100/100]

Master Craft [100/100]

Expert Speech [75/75]

## PERKS

Mana Regeneration

Skill Share

Empowerment (0/1)

Teleportation

## COMPANIONS

[Titania - Level 35/38]

[Cornelia - Level 22/26]

[Helga - Level 22/26]

[Marianne - Level 21/29]

# Chapter Two Hundred Thirty-Three

The telltale signs of teleportation were enough to make me glad that I still had one of the nodes filled with enough mana, and even more glad that I was already set up my ward modularly, and all I needed was to flare my magic, and half of the eternal gems joined the ward, while the rest stayed with me.

I still needed them to breach the main ward that was imprisoning me.

Even before he appeared in front of me, I triggered the explosion of necrotic energy, afraid of waiting for him. The necrotic energy filled my immediate surroundings, but unlike the previous time, it wasn't an explosion, but a tornado, one that would stay until it was dispersed.

The warriors were too quick to stay in there for long, retreating back, but I didn't care about them. At this point, I only cared about the mysterious enemy.

Then, before waiting for him to appear, I started gathering my mana once more, ready to breach the ward as I teleported.

[-1271 Mana]

Just as the air in front of me breached, and a suffocating presence stepped forward, I triggered my teleportation. Still, the delay was enough that I caught him stepping back into the material plane. The first thing I noticed was wings.

Angel wings.

Yet, they were not the same as Mariel. The greatest difference was not the color, but it was a good sign of the difference. They were a dark red, like dried, dirty blood, and the feathers felt dirty and sharp rather than soft and pure.

But the real difference was the feeling. Rather than radiating light, they were radiating that same suffocating energy that reminded me of killing and slaughter, awakening a fear from the bottom of my whole being.

Then, I get a glimpse of his face, which was a weird mixture of monstrous and pitiful, like his skin had melted rather than burning, which got only scarier with the intense fury that covered his face.

Maybe angering him to understand his true objective was not as clever as I first thought.

But, with my teleportation already half-complete, my surroundings turned Aether, the thin shield of mana enough to protect me.

Yet, that was not enough, as the ward surrounding me extended into Aether, preventing a quick escape. I prepared to breach through the ward with my full strength, hoping that he wouldn't be able to come back with a few seconds' delay.

That hope proved vain, as I felt a sudden flare in Aether, the already chaotic structure turning even crazier as his presence appeared near me.

The distance was not a simple thing in the Aether dimension, but with our surroundings restricted by the ward, it was less confusing than my other attempts, not that it worked to my benefit. Yet, it wasn't just Aether who started to get wild, they started to get that chaotic red nature, surging toward me.

I was too familiar with the concept to fail to identify the impact of a Divine Spark — one of unknown nature, but with the feelings it awakened, I guessed it was certainly not the Spark of Sunshine and Happiness.

I threw myself back to the material plane before that energy completely suffocated the area, feeling the chill of death.

Yet, I was still glad that I didn't try to escape when the ambush first started, as it would have been completely impossible if I had been surprised by his abilities.

Even now, I had an uphill battle, but it was always better to target an angry enemy.

I noticed I appeared quite a bit distant away from the warriors, but I was also away from the border of the ward, which was bad. If I was closer, I might have tried to breach it.

I immediately pulled Eternal gems, using seven of them to instantly create another faux elemental, dumping a great amount of my mana as well.

[-4122 Mana]

Mobility was important, especially since I feared teleportation was not an option anymore. Whatever he was doing with Aether didn't feel easy to shrug.

The rest of the stones turned into another pattern, ready to provide mana for the deadliest strike I could manage, but he didn't appear.



But the oppressive feeling got stronger. And since he already proved that he was much more capable in teleportation, I feared he was strengthening his hold on the ward.

"I can't afford to give time," I murmured. The worst thing I could do was to give him time to set up the situation further, destroying the advantage I managed to collect thanks to his arrogance.

I couldn't afford a fair fight.

I instantly created the scariest ward-breaker I could create in less than a second, and threw it toward the ward. I used the term scariest rather than strongest, because of the magical presence it created, Arcana mixing with necrotic, extremely overbearing.

At the same time, I created another ward, buried underground, this time using an even more special ingredient.

Tantric Divine Spark.

[-1921 Mana]

Too bad it was completely useless. If it hit the ward, it would crack and splash, roughly as useful as an egg thrown to a wall.

I was betting that, from another dimension, it was hard to distinguish a bluff and the real thing.

That proved correct, as he appeared in another fiery burst, casting a huge shield between the fake ward-breaker and his ward. And, his anger, even more intense, proved my assumption correct. He was anxious to keep the ward intact, even more than he was interested in keeping the weapons intact.

And, since the abilities he displayed were enough to show that he wouldn't be caring about their true potential, I started to get another feeling.

He borrowed those items, and he didn't want to explain their loss. Just like the trap for Janelor, whatever he was doing, he was trying to keep it hidden from the rest.

Good, I thought. Since I managed to anger him, I needed to find a better way to keep Silver Spires safe. And, the more problems he had, the less time he would have to poke around for me or my secrets.

I had already prepared the true surprise in form of the buried ward, working with the full principles of Tantric, but since I used only a minuscule amount of Tantric Spark, afraid of getting

noticed, required almost half a minute for it to work.

Not a great time, but almost a lifetime under the circumstances.

Luckily, I knew exactly how to distract him, even at the risk of giving a clue of my true secret. Using my conjured air elemental, I rushed toward the warriors, almost as fast as one of his light spears, his furious cry making me smile despite the intense circumstances.

Yet, even then, I knew that I wasn't fast enough to avoid his attention, and used forty eternal gems I had to create a ward, triggering continuous radiation of necrotic energy.

An eternal gem was a dangerous treasure, enough to elevate a noble house. A few of them were enough to get the notice of the whole country.

Forty of them, all tied in a necrotic array that reflected my full abilities, was a local apocalypse. The area under the ward was huge, measured in miles and miles, but it filled with necrotic energy in an instant. If that ward stayed active for a few days, it might destroy the whole empire.

Yet, even for a moment, I didn't expect it to hurt him. It was just a bonfire, one that, with every second it stayed active, could gain the notice of the other eternal, one that would force him to teleport there to extinguish it.

And as an added benefit, that much necrotic energy was a perfect way to hide my spells.

Twenty-three arrows of Tantric energy, each covered with necrotic energy, camouflaged in the wave, hitting the warriors before they could react, triggering their berserk state.

All the while, I continued to rush toward the other side of the border.

Or more accurately, my mount continued to travel, with a simulacrum on top. Normally, creating a copy was hard, but since faked being an undead, I just needed to create a bunch of bones radiating with necrotic energy.

I threw myself to the ground, another, much subtler ward to hide.

All of those tricks barely took five seconds, expanding most of my mana, and almost all of my trump cards.

Yet, he had a dangerous necrotic ward to block the apocalypse, a fake lich riding an empowered elemental toward the wall, and twenty-three berserk warriors to deal with.

I was confident that it would be enough to delay him, especially since I just needed to delay him for just twenty-five seconds.

Yet, it turned out, I was wrong.

He raised the goblet, which evaporated, turning into a weird mist that exploded, filling the area under the ward.

And, just like that, the System stopped.

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[Level: 36 Experience: 631374 / 666000]

# Chapter Two Hundred Thirty-Four

The sudden absence of the System was the single most unsettling thing I had felt in my life.

I had long tried to prepare myself for the possibility, since the day I realized the System wasn't exactly a benevolent force, but a tool. Not to mention, as I deepened my understanding of Soul Spaces, I could easily give others levels, or take them away.

It wasn't unexpected for the Eternals to have a similar method.

Still, I was glad that it wasn't as bad as it could have been. Thanks to the Divine Spark I had absorbed, I didn't find myself in that accursed state of idiocy, maintaining a little power — but even the lack of numerical measurement of my strength was unsettling.

My best guess was, currently, I could barely rival the state I was at level ten with my relatively overpowered stats, or a more ordinary fifteen level.

But, there was one great difference. I had no HP, which meant no convenient energy automatically healing my wounds, or mana I could simply use to cast the spell.

If it wasn't for the fact that the spells I had cast earlier survived, I wouldn't even have the shield against necrotic energy, and would die to my own spell.

Or worse, get discovered by him immediately.

I first turn inward, getting a glimpse of my own soul space, hoping that it would allow me to find a block, but I failed. Everything was perfectly normal and stable, including the connection. However, there was no flow from the connections. They were dry like a river during a drought.

It took only a second. With the two seconds, I wasted trying to process the shock, I still had twenty-two seconds for my trap to activate completely.

Unless it was discovered, of course.

I first decided to look around, trying to get a better understanding of the trick, as I didn't have the ability to do anything at the moment in any case.

The rest of the situation was different than I expected. Some parts, like the instant death of the warriors, were not surprising. With the system gone, and without Divine Spark to empower them, they didn't even last a second with the necrotic energy filling the space.

Some aspects, however, were different than I expected. The ward I had created to radiate necrotic energy was destroyed, and while the elemental still moved toward the ward, it did so with a much slower speed, showing signs of dispersion.

I realized the reason when I noticed the weapons of the soldiers collapsing into a pile of rust, losing their integrity as the mana embedded went wild.

It wasn't hard to notice their commonality. Each of those was empowered by the gems, which stopped as soon as the system was gone.

Looking back, it wasn't particularly shocking, whether in terms of infinite mana generation.

Or the name...

I just didn't have time to examine them in my busy schedule, always chasing something else.

I noticed the corrupted angel starting to fly even as he shouted. "Your fate would be legendary," he declared, his voice still radiating the same type of energy, but lacking the earlier intensity.

I tensed as I watched him teleport, ready to burst into action, even though the speed he was teleporting gave me hope. Rather than disappearing in an instant, it took him five seconds to step into the Aether.

Showing that, unlike my dear headmistress, he actually had access to the System, and was empowered by it considerably. A good thing to learn, but not entirely amazing, as even if he was just as strong as her, it would mean he could easily rival my overpowered state of level thirty.

Not something I even hope to delay.

If I had access to my mana, I could try to pull a trick with his Divine Spark, which was clearly not fully absorbed yet, but to do that instantly required a lot of mana.

Mana that I lacked, and while I had some tricks that I could use, none of it was instant without my own mana as a primer.

Or the assistance of my skills to multiply my capabilities significantly.

I just hoped that whatever he wanted to learn was more important than his immediate need for revenge, at least enough to delay him for a quarter of a minute, enough for my last desperate trick to work.

I had no hope of survival if that trick failed as well.

I waited anxiously for him to appear. If he appeared next to my ward rather than me, I was dead. If he appeared next to me, I had a slight chance of survival.

Yet, when he appeared, I met with an unexpected challenge.

Holding back my laughter.

He burst into existence, with an aura of destruction that was crackling on the surface of his wings. His appearance was the single scariest thing I had seen in my life, especially in my powerless state, but the location of his appearance was enough to turn that into a ridiculous excess.

He didn't appear next to me, nor did he appear next to my ward. He didn't even appear next to the air elemental, which was halfway into dispersing.

No, he appeared next to the bones I had conjured in a desperate gambit, radiating necrotic energy as they lay on the floor, motionless since I didn't even bother adding a movement charm, broken after falling down from the back of the elemental as it halfway dispersed.

What a ridiculous thing to save my life, I thought mockingly even as he opened his mouth. "You have no idea just how many plans you have ruined, you worthless bag of bones," he growled as he raised his hand, his anger radiating from the energy he gathered.

And his unique brand of fiery energy prepared to destroy the bones, I was glad that I wasn't trying to buy my life with my secrets, certainly not after angering him that much.

I wasn't surprised by such an impulsive decision, as I had long realized Divine Spark was inherently linked to mood and mental state. And, his own brand of crimson energy certainly contained a lot of anger and other dark emotions.

Still, it didn't make the sudden explosion of dust that filled the area any less chilling. Just one little mistake, and I was dead.

Not that I was still saved, of course. There were still ten seconds for my trap to activate, which was more than enough for him to discover and kill me.

Luckily, rather than searching, he stood still, his wings parted. His wings slowly lost their color, turning into a pristine white — but even at a distance, I could see that it was the effect of some

kind of disguise spell similar to Mariel using Darkness Spark rather than a genuine transformation.

Whatever his position was, he was clearly trying to keep that red energy hidden from the rest of the Eternals.

Still, it didn't make his transformation from a monstrous corrupt being to a glowing holy angel, radiating trust and kindness, any less shocking.

Yet, lost in his transformation, he noticed the flare of my ward too late, and an elemental arrow, a dangerous mixture of all four, exploded from my ward, toward the sky, and slammed against the ward.

Mixing elements was a recipe for chaos. It only worked because of the Tantric spark I mixed, keeping the incredible mixture stable for a moment, the explosion mixing into a ward, corrupting its structure.

Turning it into the greatest spectacle.

"No!" he shouted, but I didn't have time to enjoy his fear and shock, because I noticed the impact was worse than I had planned. All along the border that was initially covered by the ward, the space was rending in a familiar manner.

I either miscalculated the impact of Tantric on the outer bounds of the system, or it somehow interacted with whatever he had done with the Aether. Or maybe, whatever that goblet had impacted the border already, and my spell only compounded the effect.

Either way, I had another beautiful problem to face, and do so without the System, as the connection was still cut.

Busy with my own thoughts, I didn't even have time to enjoy the sudden horrible position my enemy had found himself in as he got slammed in the back by a true air elemental as he tried to escape.

To complete the irony, the true elemental was possessing the half-dispersed remains of my elemental mount.

Yet, I had other problems, like rapidly collapsing space as the elementals started fighting against each other. But before I could do anything, I found myself floating in an indescribable emptiness, even more, chaotic than the Aether Dimension.

I could still see the border of the material plane, marking the influence area of the System, recovering rapidly despite the elemental invasion.

There was only one problem.

I was outside of the dimensional barrier.

—

[Level: 36 Experience: 631374 / 666000]



## Chapter Two Hundred Thirty-Five

The sudden change of environment was difficult, difficult enough that I didn't pay anything more than the slightest attention to the Material Plane in front of me even as the protective energy around itself closed to push away the elementals.

That was all I was able to do as the chaotic energies of the Primordial Aether invaded my body. And, with the System still unreachable, I didn't have HP to counteract the impact, giving me very little time to respond.

It didn't even take a second for every single item I had been carrying to turn to dust, and for the Primordial Aether to invade my body.

I didn't even have any mana to resist with the System still gone.

For a moment, I expected immediate death, before I could even try to come up with a solution. After all, both Mariel and Janelor explained the destructiveness of the Primordial Aether in great detail.

Yet, for some reason, that turned out not to be the case, I realized as a second passed, and I found myself still alive. The Material Plane was gone, of course, as the concept of distance meant very little in the great disaster I found myself in.

It went against every single instinct in my body to actually close my eyes, ignoring the great threat represented by the environment, but I forced myself to do so. The pain was intense enough to tell me that, unless I discovered the reason for my immediate survival in the next few seconds, I would end up dead.

However, closing my eyes was only the beginning of my focus. With the Primordial Aether filling my body, I first needed to ignore the downpour of the heavy burning energy that pressed against me like mercury.

The space around me distorted as I turned my attention inward, glad that, unlike my other skills, Tantric was a part of my body, allowing me to check my own body.

Only to see the Divine Spark fighting against the invasion of Primordial Aether. I bit my lips in shock.

I wasn't shocked to see that it was the Divine Spark that allowed me to survive. My shock came from a different angle. Particularly, the way my Divine Spark was battling against Primordial

Aether, breaking down with each touch.

Soon, some of it had been reduced into a similar state to the Aether I had dealt with while teleporting. And, more importantly, some of it turned into mana.

Giving me a chance to survive.

At least, some kind of mana, I corrected myself even as I did my best to use my fledging Arcana abilities to create a shield, glad for all the times I had tried to cast spells while blocking the System's assistance.

My attempt was even harder than I expected. Some reasons were predictable. For example, I didn't just lack the boost of the skill but my great stats as well, which reduced my mana control capabilities greatly. And, the environment that I was casting was hardly optimal, resisting the spell I was trying to cast.

Yet, the biggest difference was the mana itself. The mana provided by the System was pure and smooth, just like fresh spring water, glistening under the sun. The mana that my body managed to break down from my environment, however, had many impurities in it, like I had filled my glass from a muddy stream.

Still, it was not the worst, I thought as I was forced to maintain the energy around myself, glad that the impurities in it didn't prevent me from channeling it — even at a greatly reduced effectiveness.

Such greatly reduced effectiveness that, creating a simple round shield around me to block the Primordial Aether even for a moment took all I could achieve. A pathetic shield that could easily be cast by a first-level mage.

In its pathetic state, it didn't take a second for it to shatter, the mana was immediately lost in the chaotic waves of the Primordial Aether, but it gave me enough time to get some more to my body.

As the shield shattered, I turned my attention back to my surroundings as well, getting a glimpse of the show. The magical space in front of me danced and shattered, tempting me to cast a more substantial protection.

An elemental shield, supported by some mana might have worked better, but I didn't dare to rely on elemental magic — not with the memories of real elementals possessing those spells. Even experimenting was out, as not only I was dealing with the constant erosion of the

Primordial Aether — which was, thankfully, still blunted by the Divine Spark in me — but also impurities in mana, which was clearly dealing a significant amount of damage.

Maybe purer mana would help, I thought even as I tried to grab some of the mana inside my body, channeling against the only skill I could currently access.

Tantric.

Shockingly, it worked even better than I had expected, easily grinding down the impurities and giving me some pure mana for me to control.

It wasn't much, barely a couple hundred points by the count of the System, but luckily it was enough to be channeled into a spell, creating a much better shield around my body.

Well, better as in it had hoped to resist the intense flow around me for a time that could justifiably be referred to as several seconds, giving me a chance to observe.

I was surrounded by nothing but Primordial Aether, dancing around me recklessly as if even the concept of the space was shattered, the turbulence threatening to shatter my shield and turn me into shreds even with the unforeseen advantage of the Divine Spark.

Still, there was no sense of distance or direction. I lost the ability to even feel the presence of my companions, making me feel extremely lonely. Though, considering I stopped all of their presence at the same time, I was confident that it was about my lost connection with the System rather than something happening to them.

At least, I hoped so, but even if it was worse than I expected, I could do nothing before solving the predicament I was facing first.

First, I needed more mana to prevent my shield from shattering.

I turned my attention to the pieces of Primordial Aether pushing against my mana, focusing on their shattered remains with the scraps I could still control with my Tantric. The process of transformation wasn't particularly fast, but I still managed to gain enough mana to feed the shield and keep intact as I steadily worked to destroy the Primordial Aether that was inside my shield.

I was glad for the teleportation mishaps I had encountered, because, without them, I would have had no reason to develop such a shield in the first place. And while its performance was significantly worse against the Primordial Aether, it was not a problem.

After all, I had all the mana I could use.

Yet, that didn't mean I didn't understand why the others treated Primordial Aether with such fear. Without Tantric's ability to break down the Primordial Aether into mana, there was no option but to die. With the exception of Janelor, the headmistress, and that mysterious enemy, every single person I met would have died in seconds.

And, even amongst those three, I suspected only Janelor could replicate my achievement — as evidenced by her ability to travel. But even she lacked my newly-discovered ability to breakdown Primordial Aether into mana if her words were accurate.

I might have been surprised by the performance of the Tantric, but after seeing it efficiently break down many types of divine sparks, it was much easier to register.

With my internal check-up complete, I turned my attention to my next challenge, to get some Primordial Aether without breaching my shield. I still had almost a thousand mana in storage, but repairing the shield constantly was devouring that storage rather steadily.

If there was an accident, I preferred it to happen when I had the means to fix it. I reached for the shield, identifying one of the more stable points in the matrix, waiting for a crack to appear — which didn't take long under the constant bombardment of Primordial Aether.

When that happened, rather than repairing it, I widened the entrance, letting some Primordial Aether inside before plugging the gap with a second shield — allowing me to repeat the process much easier by creating a functional tap.

“Not bad,” I murmured as I processed the Primordial Aether as quickly as I could manage. As I did so, I could feel my Tantric abilities actively increasing, but there was no notification, which just confirmed the current unreachable status of the System while I drifted in Primordial Aether.

I thought about reinforcing the shield even more, but after some consideration, I decided against it. The stronger the shield, the more attention-grabbing it would be. I had no idea if any being actually treated Primordial Aether as their home.

But I was reluctant to find the answer to that question. I doubted I would be happy with my discovery.

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[Level: 36 Experience: 631374 / 666000]