

# Hardcore OP-ness

Volume 1: Noob Days

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# Arc 1: Prelude to the Prologue of the Preface of OP-ness?

## Chapter 1: The MC Is a 'No-Lifer'

Drenched in steaming water, a man materialized in the middle of a grassy plain; he was completely naked, with a foamy, white substance in his short, black-hair. He casually muttered "Okay then... that was weird. Hmmm~ probably aliens? Well, I could just be dreaming, or dead, but somehow, this place feels kinda... different? Maybe I was abducted, or fell through some sort of trans-dimensional portal, heh. Sigh, they could have at least waited until I was finished though." As soap leaked into his eyes, he shouted "Ow-ow-ow, shit! Damn it! Gah, oi, whoever brought me here; couldn't you have waited until 'after' I got out of the fucking shower!?"

Unbeknownst to the mysterious, eighteen to thirty year old Human, a small yet ferocious predator stealthily approached. Before he even had a chance to react, the fluffy, white rabbit, with blood-thirsty, bright-red eyes, leapt into the air and headbutted his lower-spine.

Strangely enough, the relatively muscular man was launched a few meters forward by the attack; the large green 'health-bar' appearing above his head, was nearly emptied. His 'HP' was only at 3/10, and the words 'partial-paralysis' suddenly appeared in neon-orange, next to the name "Michael" which was solid black.

On that man's lower-back, was a huge, dark-red bruise, which seemed to be internally bleeding quite a bit. Since he was unable to remove the soap from his eyes, there was also a 'blinded' debuff as well.

As the blood pooled in his abdomen, from his broken spine and ruptured internal organs, he lost another point of health. However, even under such excruciating pain and discomfort, he was surprisingly calm, and only groaned a few times, before promptly dying.

The pale-skinned corpse, which was mostly intact, was immediately surrounded by five small, white-rabbits: Each of them became dyed a deep crimson from the carnage. Once there were only shattered bones, clumps of hair hair, broken nails, and a few chunks of uneaten flesh, a small, inconspicuous pearl was remaining.

Out of the five ravenous beasts, only the one who killed "Michael" was able to consume his 'mana-core' and evolve. Thus, the bloodthirsty creatures continued to slaughter each-other, until only the strongest remained.

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When the severely wounded rabbit swallowed the mysterious pearl, its body swelled to at least twice its previous size, and a large, spiral horn erupted from its forehead. Even though it was on the verge of death before that moment, with only 1/5 health remaining, the HP swiftly jumped up to 5/10; once it completely devoured its former comrades' mana-cores, a bright white light descended upon it, and a loud ringing resounded in the surroundings.

Next to the generic name "Horned Rabbit" was the number two, signifying that it had 'leveled-up' and all of its health-points were instantly filled, while also increasing to fifteen. A bodiless spirit, in the shape of a tiny, pitched-black will-o'-the-wisp, was quietly observing the entire scene; then it finally started laughing hysterically, and after the creature scampered off into the distance, a completely naked, level-one, human male materialized, standing on the blood-soaked ground.

This time "Michael" didn't have soap in his hair, or water on his deathly-pale skin, but strangely enough, he had a wide grin on his face. After stretching his newly formed body, he said to himself "I wonder if this is a virtual-reality game? Sigh, those bunnies were so adorable... even if they are slightly dangerous. Well, I still think it's probably aliens, or maybe my whole fucking life until now has just been inside of a VR. Hmmm, I mean, it's not like I really had that many attachments. It figures though, I finally get a job, and before my first day of work, I get abducted into a different reality, hahahaha~!"

While laughing maniacally, he had once again, drawn the ire of a small, white-furred, red-eyed rabbit. However, this time, he could hear it crawling through the thick, knee-high, green-grass; yet, when he turned around, his reflexes weren't fast enough to change his fate.

Michael was only five and a half feet tall, so the little critter was able to leap all the way up to his chest, and perform a powerful headbutt, which broke his sternum, and the concussive force had immediately stopped his heart. A huge, bright red number appeared above his head, as his entire health-pool was instantly drained to negative three: It was a deadly strike, causing three times the normal amount of damage.

This time, the rabbit directly dug the mana-core out of the corpse's skull, and evolved before any of the others had a chance to attack it. The pitch-black wisp sighed dramatically, as it muttered "What's up with this hardcore difficulty? Actually, why the fuck are these bunnies spawn camping me? I haven't seen anyone else suddenly appear in this field, so is it just me? Hmmm, normally, wouldn't the player start out in a town or village of some sort? Hell, if this was a damn hero-summoning story... ugh;

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actually, I would rather get repeatedly murdered by these adorable rodents, then have to deal with that kinda drama.”

He appeared to be the type of person who talked to himself, a lot. When Michael’s human body was reformed for the third time, he had finally decided to be quiet, and only softly grumbled “Ew?” as he looked down at his feet, which were standing inside of his former chest.

Unlike the previous pack of rabid rodents, the one who insta-killed him, left without devouring his corpse. As he casually started walking in the opposite direction from where the two horned rabbits had gone, he mumbled “Well, if I ever get hungry and can’t find anything to eat, heh-heh...”

On the horizon in each direction, there was nothing but grassy hills, so there was no real difference to him, except that he had guessed that the more powerful creatures would probably go to a place that fit their level and rank. It wasn’t hard for him to notice that next to the number by their name, there was also a letter.

Before the rabbits had evolved, there was a ‘G’ and afterwards, it had changed to ‘F’. He assumed that eating the mana-core would either boost experience, or increase the base stats, depending on the relative ranks and levels.

However, in order to test out that theory, and lessen his chance continually getting insta-killed, he needed to find one of those tiny critters. Michael could hear them crawling around in the grass, but they kept their distance, and didn’t let him get too close. He snickered and whispered “So they act like normal bunnies when you’re trying to kill them, but the moment you drop your guard...”

Then he purposefully looked up at the cloudy sky, which tempted one of the less cautious ones to jump towards his stomach. Yet, before it could reach his body, he move to the left, and then grabbed both of its ears with his left hand; his vice-like grip, crushed them to the point where the creature received two points of damage.

It released a horrible screeching noise, and he suddenly received a ‘stunned’ debuff, which made his head feel like it was going to explode. Fortunately, the duration wasn’t very long, and the other rabbits that would have taken that opportunity to attack him, were also hit by the ‘AoE’ crowd-control ability.

Michael sighed at the squirming and helpless little bunny, then muttered “Sorry, but it’s your own damn fault for trying to kill me. Ugh, gross...” as he used his left hand to break



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its neck. The eyes bulged out, and blood squirted out of its tiny nostrils, as a huge bright-red seven appeared above its head; he couldn't help but curse "For fuck's sake, gory games are a lot more fun when you don't have to touch, feel, and smell them. Whoever designed this shit, really shouldn't have put so much detail into it. Why does a stun, have to include actual mind-numbing agony?"

He sighed dramatically, as he saw something pop-up in the corner of his vision; he had received 1/10 experience needed for him to level-up from simply killing it. While grimacing, he used both of his hands to crush and twist the rabbit's head until it made a terrible popping noise: splattering blood and brain-matter all over his face and chest.

After dropping the carcass into the tall-grass, he looked at the gore in his right palm, and had to pick through it, until finding an unreasonably small, transparent-bead. Michael gagged a few times, before quickly picking it up, and shoving it into his mouth; then he immediately swallowed it, while trying to spit out the fur that had rubbed off the mana-core and attached to his tongue.

If he wasn't completely certain of his apparent immortality, he probably wouldn't have so casually tested his theory. He assumed that there was a fifty-percent chance that he would either die, or receive a minor experience-boost.

After a few seconds of waiting, while being vigilant of his surroundings, a big holographic screen popped up in front of him. Along with a notification which read "Stats have increased after digesting a level-one, rank 'G' white-rabbit's mana-core: Aura +.1, Agility +.5."

[Player Information

Name: Michael  
Titles: The Nudist, The Noob  
Level: 1  
Experience: 1/10  
Age: Adult  
Race: Human  
Class: None  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

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Health: 10/10

Mana: 15/15

Stamina: 4/5

Mana Regen per minute: 20

Health Regen per hour: 10

Strength: 3

Vitality: 1

Endurance: 1

Dexterity: 3

Agility: 1.5

Intelligence: 3

Wisdom: 2

Perception: 1

Charisma: 1

Willpower: 7

Luck: 7

Aura: 1.1

Attack Rating: 15

Defense Rating: .5]

## Chapter 2: A Noob, Learning to Play

Once Michael quickly skimmed through his status, he muttered “Ugh, it feels like my stomach is tearing itself apart... You’re probably not supposed to just take them like vitamins, huh? Actually, there’s probably some kind of alchemy or cooking skill that makes them edible, hahaha~. Oh shit, it feels like I’m gonna die. Hmmm, my HP isn’t dropping, so it should be fine, right? Sigh, I wish I could lay down for a few minutes, but I’m ninety-nine percent sure that I’ll just get swarmed by adorable death-machines... Usually, things like mana-cores from monsters are ingredients to forge or enchant weapons, so I probably wasn’t supposed to eat it.”

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Indeed, humans weren't meant to consume mana-cores, but there were still plenty who tried. However, to 'normal' people, after feeling the horrible pain of that first one, their instincts would force them to stop: assuming that they survived the experience.

Noticing that Michael was slowly losing health, one of the more bloodthirsty bunnies leaped out of the grass, and nearly headbutted the back of his neck. Fortunately for the unsuspecting man, he suddenly released a deafeningly loud, high-pitched "Chuuuu~!" while sneezing towards the mutilated rabbit carcass; strangely enough, his mana-pool actually decreased to 10/15, and a skill was activated.

Not only did he manage to dodge the sneak-attack, but he even gave it a 'deafened' debuff, which had a devastating effect on the creature's Perception. After he opened his eyes again, he furiously complained "Seriously?! Even after dying twice, I still have fucking sinus problems?! Damn it, eww, tissues~, shit, how the hell did people survive before technology?"

It took him a half a minute to blow his nose, while struggling with all of his might to avoid using his filthy hands to alleviate the problem. When he was finally able to slightly breathe out of at least one nostril, he noticed the loud grunting and growling noises all around him.

Then he saw a bunch of floating, holographic text over the tall-grass within a few meters of him; after inadvertently landing an 'AoE' disabling ability on all of the nearby rabbits, their 'hidden' effect had been nullified, and he could finally go on the offensive. Michael snickered as he reached down and grabbed the long, floppy ears of a relatively small, white-bunny, and lifted it up to eye-level.

Before the critter could scream, he quickly snapped its neck, but didn't immediately remove its mana-core. Holding the carcass by its long and relatively powerful legs, he quickly turned around and swung it as hard as he could, swatting an incoming rabbit out of the air: causing it to crash into the ground, with tremendous force.

The corpse that he was using, had been broken and twisted, but the other one was in a similar condition. Its intestines and other internal organs had ruptured and was just a total mess. Considering that prior to his abduction, Michael not only had OCD but also severe mysophobia, it was amazing that he could actually function under such a 'messy' situation.

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However, even while gagging, and complaining constantly, he still managed to use his bare-hands to kill the other five bunnies that were within his sight. Then he finally muttered “Wait a second... this is a game, right? Then there should be some kind of magical, overly-convenient bag, which I can easily put things into and take things out of... Actually, how the hell does all this shit even work? Help? Open storage, show status-screen? Okay then, guess verbal commands are useless...”

After a few seconds of silence, as he made a serious expression, a screen finally popped up in front of his face. It said “Bag One” and had sixteen squares, each of which were empty. When he held the first rabbit up to the top-right corner, it suddenly disappeared, and the blank space was replaced with a grotesque picture of what he placed inside.

Even after shoving all eight of them in the same slot, there was still no sign of there not being enough room. Then he plucked a blade of grass out of the ground, and tested whether or not it would let him stack different kinds of items in the same spots; not surprisingly, it didn’t work.

Once he had finished with the bag, he made the screen disappear, and then brought up the ‘Settings’ menu. Like most video-games, there would obviously be a way for the player to alter the UI, display, sound, gameplay, and various other important factors, which would make their experience as enjoyable as possible.

However, when he selected the gameplay, what he read made him yell “Oh, come on!? Who the hell decided this shit?!” The reason he was so angry, was because all of the settings were ‘locked’ and unable to be altered.

[Gameplay

Difficulty: Hardcore  
Realism: 100%  
Pain: 100%  
Gore: Extreme  
Sexual Content: Consensual Only  
Number of Players: 1  
Maximum Level: None  
Starting Equipment: None  
Starting Stats: Extremely Low  
Death Penalty: None  
Friendly Fire: Off]

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Michael sighed, then closed the menu, and muttered “Well, some of those settings aren’t so bad, but I really need to find some damn water. Actually, maybe I could conjure some?” He concentrated for a few seconds, and another screen appeared.

[Spellbook

Deafening Noise Level 1: Create a high-pitched and extremely loud sound, infused with mana. Every point of mana is equivalent to one meter of range. Potency is dependent on the Aura stat.]

He remembered sneezing like he normally did, but somehow it had turned into a magical ability. When he thought about ‘activating’ it, he suddenly felt the urge to make a shrill “Beeeeep~!” which lasted for a few seconds, before stopping after he had completely run out of mana.

Michael started laughing hysterically, and couldn’t help but wonder “Is it really that simple? I probably couldn’t create much water with only fifteen MP... Unless I could just directly remove the blood, guts, dirt and other filth from my body?” However, while he was waiting for his mana to regenerate, he looked towards the west and noticed that black storm-clouds were rapidly approaching.

Seeing that, he stopped worrying about trying to use magic to clean himself, and started focusing on a much more important matter: Leveling! After wandering around for a few minutes, he stopped and made a terrible “Niii~!” sound, then glanced around at the floating health-bars of the rabbits that had been preparing to attack him.

Two of the deafened bunnies leaped towards him at the same time, one to the chest, and another aimed at his back. Michael dodged to the right, and both of them crashed into each-other, head-first; they each received and dealt, bright yellow, critical strikes of five, causing their skulls to cave in.

Watching the adorable little critters die, he sighed, while grumbling “Whoever designed this, is such an asshole. I would rather have to fight a bunch of giant cockroaches, than slaughter such cute animals... There better not be a field of kittens after this shit.” Suddenly, his health decreased by five, and a huge chunk was torn out of his left calf; when he looked down, there was a level two grasshopper, which was nearly two feet tall.

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There was a horrible chirping noise, as it rubbed its legs together, and Michael felt like his head was going to explode. In fact, the compressed sinuses above each of his eyebrows burst open, along with his eardrums, eyeballs; shortly after that, the blood-vessels in his brain ruptured.

His third death was much more painful and brutal than the first two, but once his pitch-black spirit had appeared, he calmly mentioned “Well, I guess I don’t have to worry about washing myself off anymore...” Once it devoured the mana-core in his brain, the grasshopper began mutating rapidly; its green exoskeleton turned from bright-green to dark-red, and its name became “Blood-Locust.”

The creature’s health went from ten to twenty, and the size increased by at least fifty-percent. Compared to the jump between a regular rabbit and the horned kind, the physical stature didn’t change too much. It was still only going from rank ‘G’ to ‘F’ so the difference in overall stats, compared to the bunnies, depended more upon the allocation.

Once the locust flew away, Michael allowed himself to be ‘respawned’ and his new body wasn’t drenched in blood. He also noticed that even though he was hungry and thirsty before dying, once he came back to life, he felt completely sated.

As he looked down at the filthy, naked, headless corpse, he smirked, and activated his bag. After storing his former body in the first slot, he then continued to shove the two rabbits in number four, along with the other seven.

Right after he was finished with that, he hit an amazingly high note, and held it for a second. There was only one bunny within his range, so he walked over and grabbed it by the ears, snapping its neck and becoming bathed in a bright-white radiance, accompanied by a feminine voice that said “You have reached level two.” in a monotone.

## Chapter 3: Death with Benefits

Michael's status-screen opened automatically, but he was surprised when he realized that he only received two points to allocate. Without even having to think about it, he place one in Vitality and the other in Endurance.

### [Player Information

Name: Michael  
Titles: The Nudist, The Noob  
Level: 2  
Experience: 0/20  
Age: Adult  
Race: Human  
Class: None  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Unemployed]

### [Stats

Health: 20/20  
Mana: 15/15

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Stamina: 10/10

Mana Regen per minute: 20

Health Regen per hour: 20

Strength: 3

Vitality: 2

Endurance: 2

Dexterity: 3

Agility: 1.5

Intelligence: 3

Wisdom: 2

Perception: 1

Charisma: 1

Willpower: 7

Luck: 7

Aura: 1.1

Attack Rating: 15

Defense Rating: 1]

Endurance increased both his Health and Stamina by five, while Vitality also raised his Health by five, but also his regeneration by ten. He snickered, then said “Well, now the question is whether or not I can still get experience for killing level-one rabbits.”

It had been less than an hour since he was mysteriously transported into a different world, and yet he didn’t even think for a moment about trying to go back; in fact, it was almost as if he had wanted to be there from the very beginning. Of course, he still had plenty of complaints: “Ow, shit, you’ve got to be fucking kidding me... a poisonous porcu-”

There were plenty of other adorable animals in that tall grass, but all of them were either level one or two, rank ‘G’ monsters; each of which still had the ability to kill him, if he was slightly careless. Aside from the porcupine, grasshoppers, and white-rabbits, there were also giant monarch butterflies, owl moths, dragonflies, and other similar, flying critters. Truthfully, they were all named after their much smaller counterparts, and could barely even be considered magical beasts; to Humans however, they were all vicious demons that only the most foolhardy adventurers would dare to approach alone... especially not when they were completely naked and unarmed.



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After stepping on the poisonous porcupine, and becoming paralyzed, the cute critter continued to tear out his left eye, and then chew into the socket, until it was finally able to reach his brain a few minutes later. During the later half of the process, he started to regain his ability to feel pain, but still couldn't move.

Fortunately, after dying, he received a passive ability called "Resist Paralysis Level 1," which did exactly what it said. Once he respawned, then added a second headless corpse to his collection, Michael proceeded to encounter a brown-furred field mouse, that was the size of a city-rat.

Unlike the rabbits, it didn't try to jump at him, or sneak around; it confronted him directly... and he kicked it. It wasn't some amazing technique, just a normal swing of his leg, punting the critter a few meters in the air and lowering its Health by five points.

Strangely enough, the level-two mouse, with 10/15 HP left, tried to charge towards him again; yet, this time it performed an actual ability: "Claw Attack." As the name suggests, it was just a couple swipes of the relatively small fingernails on its hands.

Michael tried to dodge it, but the little rat was incredibly fast; it jumped a few feet in the air, and lunged towards his groin, figuratively dismembering him. The damage to his Health was only six points, though a ridiculously powerful 'bleeding' debuff was causing him to lose a lot more.

However, even if he was going to die, it didn't mean he would let the sinister rodent escape with its life. He dropped down to his knees and grabbed its neck with both hands; while the rabbits would be defenseless in that state, the mouse was not.

The pitch-black eyes glared at him, and caused his body to uncontrollably stiffen; it was an 'intimidation' skill, but not very effective against targets of equal level or higher. His hands swiftly squeezed, and then twisted in opposite directions, causing a large "+2 Exp" to appear.

Immediately putting the corpse into the second bag-slot, he steadily lost Health until reaching 3/20, and then it started regenerating. He kept the 'neutered' debuff, but didn't receive any other problems... aside from the fact that his reproductive system was removed, and his urinary tract no longer functioned.

Michael didn't worry about it too much though; in fact, he didn't even wait for his Health-pool to completely fill. Once he could walk properly again, he encountered another one of those rats, but it was only level-one.

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Their size was only slightly smaller, but otherwise, it was difficult to tell the difference without the floating text above its head. When the field-mouse saw him, it unhesitantly charged, and prepared to use its “Claw Attack.”

However, the difference in speed between the one he had faced before, and the second, was pretty dramatic. He not only evaded the assault, but also stomped down in the rodent’s neck, with his right heel, severing its spinal cord; the HP dropped down to 2/10 instantly, and it only took a few more seconds to finally die, giving him a single experience point.

Even if the higher leveled and ranked monsters gave much more experience, the weaker ones were far easier to kill. Unfortunately, it was impossible for him to target anything specific, because there were just too many different types of animals, and they each had very different behavioral patterns.

The sky was becoming darker, and thunder was resounding, but the rainclouds had yet to reach him. It was impossible for him to tell what time of day it was, because he didn’t even know if the planet was anything like Earth.

After killing five rabbits and three giant mice, his stamina reached 2/10 and fatigue finally forced him to stop moving. Not only did he have to sit down and rest, but the various wounds on his body started to fester and become infected with a flesh-eating bacteria; in less than five minutes, his Health reached zero, and he died.

However, he did receive another passive skill called “Immune System Boost Level 1,” which dramatically increased his resistance against various infectious diseases. When Michael’s new body was formed, he started laughing maniacally, then yelled “Yes! I can breath out of both nostrils! Thank you, mysterious aliens or whatever the hell you are!”

Making so much noise, attracted the attention of a small finch-like bird, which divebombed directly into the back of his head, dealing twenty-five damage as he immediately fell down onto his previous corpse. His wisp suddenly muttered “Wait a second... since I didn’t have my mana-core eaten the last time, doesn’t that mean it’s still in my fourth head?”

Without waiting for the beefy crow-sized, brown and grey “Vicious Sparrow” to fly away, he quickly respawned and grabbed the level two, ‘F’ ranked monster with both hands. Evolving didn’t regenerate the Health that it lost from smashing into his skull at sixty

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miles-per-hour, so he was able to use all of his relatively powerful upper-body strength to snap its neck.

Michael continued to store the carcass in bag-slot three, while putting his own corpses into number one. He didn't really want to try to tear a human head open without any kind of tools; at least it wasn't something that he could do at the time.

When he killed the rank 'F' monster, he realized that it have twice the experience as the level-two rat; he was left with only six points left, until he could reach level-three. As the rain started pouring down on the grasslands, he muttered "Well, at least I don't have to worry about catching a cold, heh-heh." Indeed, even if he did get sick, he would likely be killed again before he had a chance to suffer and die from the illness.

As he unhurriedly walked towards the south, with little to no visibility, he grumbled "Ugh, so much mud... ow, shit, wait a minute. Why the hell am I fighting completely bare-handed, when there are so many fucking sharp and jagged rocks laying around?" Michael looked down at his muddy feet, noticed that his Health and stamina were being slowly but constantly drained; then he reached down and grabbed a handful of dirty pebbles, putting them into bag-slot number five.

All he had to do was touch them with his hands, and he could shove most things into his magical, nonexistent, item storage device. He wanted to try and test whether he could put living organisms inside of it, but all of the animals that he had met thus far, were all incredibly dangerous: It definitely didn't work on grass that was still in the ground though.

Technically, all of the carcasses and corpses that he stored, should have had plenty of microorganisms, bacteria, viruses though, so he was pretty sure that it didn't matter too much. When he put grass into one of the slots, after pulling it out, from what he could tell, it still looked pretty Healthy.

Then Michael noticed something important; none of the foliage had floating names or life-bars. Picking up another handful of pebbles, he concentrated on them, while imagining a fairly common skill in video-games that he had played, called "Identification."

The moment it activated, he received a message "Scan Level 1 Acquired." Which was accompanied by another pop-up, which read "Small Jagged Rocks: These were once large stones, but were broken apart by magical-beasts. Poor Quality, no level requirement."

## Chapter 4: Immortality for the Win

Armed with a myriad of pebbles, Michael felt that they wouldn't be very effective when the rain was obscuring his view, and the wind-speeds were so high. He continued to wander aimlessly, across the seemingly endless, muddy, grasslands, until he felt a sharp pain in his right leg and fell to the ground.

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As he yelled “Shit, fuck, damn it, arg!” he noticed that from the knee down was completely mutilated. There were several sharp bones sticking out of his skin, and a massive amount of blood was being lost: along with fifteen Health-points.

Then he saw the tiny, brown, armadillo that had rammed into him. It had a ridiculous Health-pool of thirty, and was a level-three, rank ‘F’ monster; he had accidentally entered a more dangerous zone.

Michael threw a pebble at the creature, while laying on the ground, but it only did a single point of damage. He started laughing hysterically, and promptly bled to death; when the little critter cracked his skull open and devoured his mana-core, nothing happened.

It didn’t level up or evolve, which caused him to wonder “I suppose humans are probably considered rank ‘F’ then, huh? Heh, I guess that means I need to find a rank ‘E’ monster to evolve...” He had to wait for twenty minutes, before the armadillo finished nibbling at his corpse, so that he could respawn.

However, the moment his new body formed, he received a notification: “Title Earned: The Immortal. You have died seven times, and your spirit still hasn’t dissipated: Willpower and Luck have each increased by seven.” Both of those stats could not be improved using stat-points, and considering that he was up to fourteen in each, he had reached a realm that surpassed what the majority of beings in that world could achieve.

Michael snickered and muttered “It says that luck affects RNG, but does that make mine really high or ridiculously low? Willpower influences my magic resistance, but it doesn’t tell me how much... speaking of magic, I wonder how that works?” Typically, learning or creating spells requires extensive research, plenty of training, and a calm, safe environment to practice in; he didn’t have any of those things, because if he stayed in one place for too long, a group of ferocious animals would be attracted to his mana-core.

He reached down and shoved his half-eaten corpse into bag-slot one, then started to carefully walk to the north: though he himself had no idea where he was going. During the storm, most of the rabbits and other critters that he was trying to find, were a lot less active; it took him nearly an hour to just find two brown field-mice and three white-bunnies.

Michael didn’t receive any injuries, because he made sure to use his high-pitched, deafening spell, whenever he suspected that there were enemies near him. Then,

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when he finally found another level-one rat, the moment he stomped on its head, he received a message that said “Congratulations, you have reached level three.” in a monotonous feminine voice.

His status-screen automatically opened up, as he shoved the carcass into his inventory. Just like the time before, he placed a stat-point in Strength and Endurance, to increase his survivability.

[Player Information

Name: Michael  
Titles: The Nudist, The Noob, The Immortal  
Level: 3  
Experience: 0/30  
Age: Adult  
Class: None  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

Health: 30/30  
Mana: 15/15  
Stamina: 15/15  
Mana Regen per minute: 20  
Health Regen per hour: 30

Strength: 3  
Vitality: 3  
Endurance: 3  
Dexterity: 3  
Agility: 1.5  
Intelligence: 3  
Wisdom: 2  
Perception: 1  
Charisma: 1

Willpower: 14  
Luck: 14  
Aura: 1.1

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Attack Rating: 15  
Defense Rating: 1.5]

[Passives

Resist Paralysis Level 1: Resists level-one paralysis spells and abilities.

Immune System Boost Level 1: Resists level-one infectious diseases and illnesses.]

Aside from the numerical difference, he didn't actually feel much of a change in his body; his muscles didn't get any bulkier, and even his skin-tone remained an extraordinarily pale white. To test whether or not he was actually any more durable than before, Michael allowed himself to be headbutted in the chest by a level-one, white-rabbit.

Since he was prepared for it, and even flexed his relatively large pectoral muscles, the attack actually did more damage to the bunny, than to him. Its neck was broken, and it had a paralyzed status, as it lifelessly fell to the ground, but all that happened to him, was a light bruise; his health dropped to 27/30, and he did cough a few times, before picking up the dying critter.

Without waiting for it to lose the remaining hit-point, Michael quickly tried to shove it into bag-slot four. However, nothing happened, so he tried number six and received a red message: "Unable to store creatures with active mana-cores in the extra-dimensional bag-space; would you like to utilize the extra-dimensional prison?"

Unfortunately, before he could answer, the rabbit succumbed to its injuries, and he wasn't able to test it out. Sighing dramatically, he placed it along with the other carcasses, and continued walking northward at a slow, but steady pace.

After a few minutes, he noticed that the storm was almost completely gone. Although, since it was nighttime, and still very cloudy, the visibility wasn't any better than before. Michael also realized that he couldn't see or hear any more monsters; as he continued in the same direction, the grass was getting a lot shorter.

Every now and then, he would step on a sharp rock and yell "Oh for fuck's sake!" or "Damn it, arg, ugh, ow!" before picking them up and shoving them into his bag indiscriminately. Unlike the corpses and carcasses, which were organized individually

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and could be specifically removed, slot-six just said “Small Jagged Rocks: 21 lbs.” without any other information.

He kept walking until his health and stamina were both less than ten percent, but finally collapsed onto the muddy ground and lost consciousness. Since he was laying sideways, he didn’t suffocate, and there weren’t even any carnivorous rabbits in the vicinity to devour his defenseless body; for the first time since being brought into that mysterious world, Michael had finally fallen asleep.

A pitch-black wisp separated from his corporeal form, and started freely flying into the sky. Once it reached a height of about two-miles, a thin wire appeared, and glowed bright-white; he could no longer move any farther away from his ‘active’ mana-core.

Instead of dreaming, he could only float around, experiencing time as if it was passing several times faster than normal. When the clouds were gone, a beautiful, blue, crescent moon could be easily seen.

Compared to his physical body, as a spirit, Michael’s vision was far greater. With such a ridiculous altitude, it was easy for him to scan most of the massive grassland around him, and he even saw forests, rivers, lakes, and mountains in the distance.

There were also colossal monstrous creatures, most of which were fighting against each-other. He snickered, while muttering “I guess those must be Bosses, huh? Since they aren’t that far away from the level-one zone, they probably aren’t that powerful though. It seems like... a couple thousand little horned rabbits are fighting against a gigantic snake, and actually winning. That thing has to be at least a twenty-meters long, so it’s gotta be ‘D’ or ‘C’ rank... probably. Sigh, I guess I can only see their names and other information when I’m up close.”

Since he didn’t have anything better to do, Michael casually watched the chaotic battles. Then he heard a distant, high-pitched voice, saying “Oi, Human... guess he’s a heavy sleeper. Okay, quickly tie the fucker up; even if he’s unarmed and naked, don’t take any chances.”

By the time he returned to his body, he saw a group of three, four-foot tall, dark-green skinned people; each of them was wearing a set of roughly-made, hide and leather armor. One was a woman, with a slender figure, very large, bright-blue eyes, and short, but pointed, elven ears; the other two were men, with a decent amount of facial hair, and similarly small frames.



He snickered and murmured “Goblins, huh? Guess they aren’t the ugly, semi-intelligent, serial-rapist kind... that girl is kinda cute too. Although, judging by how vicious the bunnies were...” All three of them had daggers attached to their belts, and small satchels on their backs.

As soon as they finished using strips of leather to bind his hands and feet, the woman smirked and commanded “Carry him back to the village carefully! He needs to be alive!” Then she whispered “It seems like I’ll finally be able to evolve...”

## Chapter 5: Meeting New People... And Animals

Above her head were the words “Sarah, Level-6 Goblin Assassin, Rank-G.” There was also a Health-bar, which was completely full, but only had fifteen points total.

Michael laughed and asked himself “I wonder what she’ll turn into? Actually, why would they need to keep me alive? Can’t they just crack my skull open and eat my mana-core?” Dying seven times already, his sense of self-preservation had become... nonexistent.

After attempting to lift his body, the two Goblins complained “He’s way too heavy... how the hell are we supposed to move this asshole?” Vitality, endurance and strength, each have a dramatic influence on a creature or person’s weight; his body was originally one-hundred and eighty pounds, regardless of his short stature, because his muscular and bone density were relatively high.

However, agility has the opposite effect, but size and leverage are both, much more important. Even with the three extremely-light Goblins together, they still weren’t able to lift Michael; realizing the problem, the three of them immediately pulled out their crude, iron daggers, and took a few dozen steps backwards.

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They were actually surprised that even when they were making so much noise, and treating him so roughly, that he managed to stay asleep. Sarah commanded “Stop, don’t get too close... He’s obviously faking. The moment we approach, he’ll attack... He might even be able to break free of those shitty bindings as well. It’s not worth it, let’s get the hell outta here while we still can.”

When they were about to leave, the pitch-black wisp entered the exhausted body, and he lazily opened his brown eyes, while easily slipping out of the poorly-tied leather-strips and yawning. The first thing that he said was “Eww, gross... damn it, there’s so much dirt caked onto my hair and face.”

The Goblin trio were making serious expressions, while holding their serrated, poison-coated, double-edged, rusty iron-daggers, preparing to attack. Michael just snickered at them, as he stood-up and cracked his neck a few times, then asked Sarah “You mentioned that I needed to be alive for something, right? Can you explain it a bit more for me?”

However, instead of answering him, she whispered “Shadow-Cloak” and all three of them disappeared into the darkness. With a Perception of just one, the naked man obviously couldn’t see their stealth technique, and could only sigh dramatically as they fled.

Considering how low his Agility was, it wouldn’t have been possible for him to chase after them anyway: not that he would have. Michael was tempted to simply kill himself, and just respawn with a completely clean and rested body, but considering that he didn’t have any way to end it quickly and painlessly, he decided to just do things the old-fashioned way: Go to the river.

While he was surveying the surroundings in wisp-form, he noticed quite a few sources of water; unfortunately, each of them was at least a mile away. Before he left, he reached down and untied the thin leather-straps that were around his ankles, and put all of them into bag-slot six.

Since he came from the southern grasslands, he hadn’t encountered any magical-beasts; yet, there were still normal animals. The reason that he could tell, was because the adorable, fluffy brown rabbits, grey squirrels, or random birds, didn’t try to kill him.

When he looked at a miscellaneous red-fox kit that was prowling around, he noticed that its level was zero, and it wasn’t even ranked. He crouched down and gave the creature a warm smile, and it unhesitatingly walked up to him; since the left side of his body was

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covered in dried mud, he reached out with his right hand and gently caressed the beautiful, orange fur, casually scratching behind its ears and asking “I bet you’d love some delicious rabbit-meat...”

He pulled out the first bunny that he had to kill, it’s head wasn’t even there anymore, but the adorable vixen didn’t seem to mind the gore. It immediately began using its front paws and tiny snout to tear apart the carcass; he didn’t stick around, and continued to walk towards the river.

When he was about a kilometer away, he could finally start to hear it clearly: Although, the small amount of moon and starlight weren’t nearly enough to let him see that far ahead of him. By the time that he made it to the relatively small and shallow stream, his Stamina-meter was down to 4/15.

Michael muttered “Maybe I should just lay down, face-first? No, nope, that’s a terrible idea... I definitely don’t want to drown or suffocate. Ugh, it’s so much easier to just respawn though...” After standing in the flowing, fresh-water, which was only up to his shins, he sat down with his legs crossed and started using his hands to wash his face, hair, and body.

There was no soap, so even though he scrubbed furiously for twenty-minutes, he still didn’t really feel ‘clean.’ The exhausted Human also had another pressing issue: he was getting hungry. As he was wonder what he should eat, there was a loud growl behind him; it was a level-one, rank-less grizzly bear, which had a surprising fifty-points of Health.

It was standing on its hind-legs and threatening the person who was invading its territory. However, Michael just turned around, then glared at it, while asking “What the fuck’s your problem, asshole?”

He was so irritated by the fact that he couldn’t wash himself off properly, that he unintentionally channeled mana into his eyes and voice. The skill “Intimidation Level 1” was created, and automatically activated.

Since his level was so much higher than the bear’s, it was given a ‘terrified’ debuff; the effect was a combination of ‘fear,’ which would force the target to flee, and a ‘stun’ to keep it from being able to move. When the three-meter tall grizzly, suddenly got down on all fours and started trembling, Michael sighed dramatically. After a few seconds, he gazed at the ‘cute’ animal, and softly said “Don’t worry kid, I’m not going to hurt you... Come here, I’ll give you a tasty snack.”

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Focusing mana into his calm and gentle voice, he unintentionally broke his previous spell, and cast a new one: “Enthrall Level 1.” It was a very simple ability, but remarkably useful when dealing with animals or even humanoids.

Upon hearing his convincing words, the bear seemed to know exactly what Michael wanted it to do, and cautiously approached him. He held out his right hand, and one of the seventeen remaining white-rabbit carcasses appeared; it died by having its neck broken, so there wasn’t much damage to its fur or body.

After sniffing the bunny a few times, the grizzly gently bit down on it, and then slowly walked away, stopping on the riverbank and sitting down. Then it used a combination of its paws and teeth to tear the meat apart, happily devouring the delicious meal.

However, when it ate the head, there was an almost instantaneous change to its body; the brown fur started turning completely white, and rather than getting larger, it actually shrank. Watching that strange scene, Michael muttered “Interesting... so it isn’t necessarily the bigger the better, when it comes to magical-beasts and evolution. Well, that isn’t very surprising, and I kinda expected the color-scheme change, but... those ears are kinda weird-looking on a bear.”

Not just the rabbit-like ears, even the eyes went from dark brown, to bright-red. Then he received a notification: “You have created a White Hare-Bear, would you like to tame him or release him into the wild?”

Michael groaned, and muttered “That name... No, nope, can’t do it. I mean, he’s definitely adorable... but I’ll pass. Bears eat way too much, and I can’t afford to take care of a pet right now. Also, knowing my luck, he’ll just end up getting killed, and then I’ll get depressed.” Once it was released, the newly created magical-beast didn’t act the same way as all those other creatures that he had seen in that field; it didn’t become aggressive, and just waded in the shallow water for a few minutes.

Then it caught a relatively large salmon, and brought it over to the spectating Human. Michael smiled at the ‘Hare-Bear’ and gratefully accepted the gift, even saying “Thank you very much.” as if he thought that the animal could understand English.

However, even if it didn’t comprehend the words, his meaning was very clear. The fish was still alive and squirming around in his hands, as the pure-white grizzly with bunny-ears, reluctantly left him.

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Michael was finally able to test something that he had been extremely curious about for a while; he inserted the salmon into bag-slot seven successfully. When he pulled it back out, it was still alive and didn't look any different; to test another theory, he had to leave it in there for a few minutes.

While he was waiting, he stood up and walked over to the dry riverbed; it was essentially just a bunch of smooth green and brown stones, so he didn't have to worry about getting covered in mud or dirt. Although, he still considered everything to be relatively filthy, compared to what he was used to, but since he didn't worry about getting sick, his mysophobia was easily subdued.

Once he sat down, he sighed and removed the level-two field mouse from his inventory. Like many of the others, he had snapped its neck to kill it, so the overall damage to its pelt and body was negligible; there was no noticeable decomposition or changes, and it was even still covered in his own blood.

Michael was actually fairly talented in cooking, but was never in a situation where he needed to flay the ingredients first. In fact, he had no way to cook it anyway, or a knife to cut it, only his hands and some dirty rocks: which he didn't use.

Three strength was still within the limits of a 'normal' Human, but it was enough to tear apart the brown-furred rat. It was messy, really terrible, and if he wasn't starving, he would have definitely lost his appetite.

However, while grimacing and singing a popular song from his original world, the naked man kept going until he was able to separate some of the edible organs and meat, from the rest. The pelt was ruined, bones were destroyed, and even the head was crushed beyond recognition, with only the mana-core being salvageable.

Perhaps if he was seriously worried about survival, he would have stored and saved even the left-overs from that bloody meal, but after eating some raw field-mouse, Michael decided to just throw it into the river and let it get washed away. His "Immune System Boost" reached level two, and all it cost him was twenty minutes of laying on the ground and groaning in agony.

He complained "I wonder if I just contracted salmonella or dysentery? Either way, I'm gonna have diarrhea regardless, so I might as well just OD on these fucking mana-cores anyway..." while removing five white-rabbits from his bag and tearing their heads off, before hurrying to store the bodies again.

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After washing the six, tiny crystalline beads, he started with the level two rat's. He waited a few seconds, and surprisingly didn't feel too much pain... until a few seconds later, when he felt like he was having appendicitis.

Michael had an appendectomy when he seventeen, but once his body was reformed, the missing organ was replaced with a brand-new one. Of course, that was one of the many reasons why Humans typically couldn't or didn't consume mana-cores; for whatever reason, it caused their appendix to burst.

He was dying anyway, so he decided to just shove the rest of the little beads into his mouth, and swallow all five at the same time. While he awaited his death in absolute agony, a screen appeared in front of his face, which read "Stats have increased after digesting a level-two, rank 'G' field-mouse's mana-core: Aura +.2, Vitality +1." Then there was another pop-up, which told him "Stats have increased after digesting five level-one, rank 'G' rabbit mana-cores: Aura +.5, Agility +2.5."

[Player Information

Name: Michael  
Titles: The Nudist, The Noob, The Immortal  
Level: 3  
Experience: 1/30  
Age: Adult  
Race: Human  
Class: None  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

Health: 10/35  
Mana: 15/15  
Stamina: 5/15  
Mana Regen per minute: 20  
Health Regen per hour: 40

Strength: 3  
Vitality: 4  
Endurance: 3  
Dexterity: 3

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Agility: 4  
Intelligence: 3  
Wisdom: 2  
Perception: 1  
Charisma: 1

Willpower: 14  
Luck: 14  
Aura: 1.8

Attack Rating: 15  
Defense Rating: 1.5]

[Passives

Resist Paralysis Level 1: Resists level one paralysis spells and abilities.

Immune System Boost Level 2: Resists level two infectious diseases and illnesses.]

## Chapter 6: Michael's Best Friend

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The average human was actually only level-zero, and they certainly didn't possess a mana-core. In order to obtain one, a person would have had to consume one from a rank-G magical-beast, or spend years going through intensive training for their respective field of expertise and gaining a 'Class'.

Michael was different; perhaps it was related to the being that brought him from his original world, but he did start with a significant advantage over most humanoid races. Of course, he had no way of knowing it at the time, and could only writhe in agony as his body struggled to stay alive.

He yelled "Oi, Hare-Bear, where the hell are you!? Someone, please just fucking kill me!" It wasn't that he didn't try to bash his skull open with a rock, or tear out his carotid artery with his fingernails, he definitely did attempt to commit suicide in quite a few ways... but he wasn't allowed.

Whenever he was about to do it, an invisible barrier appeared and stopped his actions, while a monotone feminine voice told him "Friendly Fire has been averted." There was no emotion, yet he felt as if she was taunting him.

Michael yelled "Sarah, didn't you want to use me to evolve?! You're there somewhere right?! Come on, don't worry, I'll let you do whatever you want with my corpse, just please kill me, okay?!" Unfortunately, rather than attracting the attention of ravenous predators, bandits, or monsters, he was just lying there, slowly losing health and gaining it back in a never-ending cycle.

Ironically, his HP regen was boosted after digesting the level-two mana-core, otherwise he would have died a lot more quickly. Eventually, his stamina reached the point where he was about to lose consciousness, so at least he didn't have to worry about the pain for much longer.

However, it was at that time, when he heard a faint whimpering near his left ear. He lazily opened his eyes, and glanced at the adorable red-furred fox that was laying down beside his head.

He asked himself "Geeze, why does it feel like... ugh, the wild animals in this world, are way too easily domesticated? Although, considering how aggressive those magical-beasts were... maybe it's some sort of balancing mechanic?" Michael reached over and picked up the docile creature, and placed it onto his chest, while gently caressing its relatively small and fragile body.



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Foxes were part of the Canidae family, so they followed many of the same behavioral patterns as dogs. Although, most animals who lived in the wilderness, didn't easily grow accustomed to humans, and would typically avoid them.

As the dying man gazed into those cat-like, bright yellow eyes, he smirked and whispered "Did you come looking for more of that tasty bunny-meat? Heh-heh, don't worry, I still have quite a bit left..." He pulled a rabbit-carcass out of his bag, and placed it to the right of his body; without hesitation, the kit quickly got off of his chest and started devouring it.

It was rather messy, and a decent amount of blood and other juices splashed onto Michael's body, but he was in too much pain to care. As he lost consciousness, a jet-black wisp emerged from his forehead, and hovered a few feet in the air.

Immediately after eating the mana-core of the white-rabbit, the red-fox began to change. It's fur lost all its color, and its eyes turned a bright-crimson: the vulpine pupils remained the same though. Then, its tail split in half, and both became significantly longer, while maintaining the same magnitude of fluffiness.

The wisp muttered "Seriously, so cliché... but it's still kinda cool. Usually, the maximum is nine, but if the highest rank is SSS, which I'm just completely guessing at this point, shouldn't it be possible to have eleven? Although, there's no guarantee that each additional evolution would keep increasing the tail-count. Sigh, oh wow, those ears... it definitely looks like a fennec now."

Suddenly, he received a notification: "You have created a White Twin-Tailed Fox, would you like to tame her or release her into the wild?" It was a tough decision; he didn't know if there was some sort of limit, perhaps he could only ever have one pet, or maybe his experience would diminish each time he gains a new one, he also suspected that it might cost him a level... but he felt like it would probably be worth it in the long run.

Michael finally whispered "Yes, I would like to tame her, though that sounds kinda weird when I say it out loud." Immediately following his words, a bright light emanated from his unconscious body and enveloped the newly-evolved, rank-G, magical-beast.

Then the notification changed, and asked him what he wanted to name the young vixen. He thought about it for a moment, before muttering "Would Inari be too unoriginal? Well, it's a cute name, and I can't really think of any other fox-related names at the moment. Yea, let's go with Inari..." When he finished speaking, the light faded, and instead of the neutral yellow, the animal's name was written in a friendly green.

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Since he had nothing better to do, he wanted to see just how amazing his new pet was... but considering that it was level-zero, and had five HP, he wasn't expecting much.

[Companion Information

Name: Inari  
Titles:  
Level: 0  
Experience: 0/1  
Age: Child  
Race: Twin-Tailed Fox  
Rank: G  
Class: None  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

Health: 5/5  
Mana: 10/10  
Stamina: 2.5/2.5  
Mana Regen per minute: 10  
Health Regen per hour: 5

Strength: .5  
Vitality: .5  
Endurance: .5  
Dexterity: 1  
Agility: 2  
Intelligence: 2  
Wisdom: 1  
Perception: 1  
Charisma: 1

Willpower: 3  
Luck: 3  
Aura: .5

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Attack Rating: 2.5

Defense Rating: .25]

Michael immediately started laughing, and said “Wow, that’s pretty bad... damn. Those fucking bunnies would slaughter her... Although~, since I already have about eighteen mana-cores from level-one field-mice and rabbits, I should be able to give her a bit of a power-up. Sigh, of course, I have to actually die or wait for recover first, which could take a while.”

Rather than a slave or a pet, Inari was simply connected to him through a spiritual link, and couldn’t be forcefully controlled by him, not that he would want to do that in the first place. In fact, the game did have a decent amount of rules, and they were automatically enforced; similar to how he couldn’t kill himself, if someone tried to rape or enslave another person, they simply wouldn’t be able to do it.

It was a fairly large taboo, considering that a god-like being personally enforced all of those laws, the perpetrators were typically seen as heretics by nearly all other humanoids and harshly persecuted. Friendly Fire applied to everyone, not just Michael; as long as two people love or care about each-other, they literally can’t intentionally or accidentally kill or even maim each-other.

For some, it might seem like divine protection, while others felt as if they were cursed. However, it wasn’t up to Humans, Elves, Orcs, Goblins, or any of the other races to decide; they couldn’t oppose such a powerful entity, and very few would ever dare to try.

Perhaps if Inari’s intelligence was higher, she would have been able to communicate telepathically with Michael, to help him alleviate his boredom, but she wasn’t even capable of understanding English. She certainly was a very smart fox; in fact, from the moment that she met him, her plan was to act ‘cute’ and receive a free meal.

Her scheme worked far better than she had ever anticipated though, and she even managed to evolve because of his generosity. The vixen, like all other ‘normal’ animals in that world, had an innate comprehension of what mana-cores were, and which kind they need to eat to grow in various ways; they also knew that, if they try to skip a step, and consume one that was too powerful, they would definitely die.

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Humanoids weren't gifted with the same genetic memories and understanding, so they needed to experiment and perform tests. However, Michael had a massive advantage over all other beings on that planet: He was a 'Player.'

Not only was he truly immortal, but he had access to the various 'game-like' information-screens. There was also the 'extra-dimensional bag,' some sort of imprisoning system, notifications, astral-projection and plenty of other completely unreasonable abilities, which he didn't even know about yet.

## Chapter 7: The Adorable Glass Cannon

Inari washed herself off in the shallow river, then casually shook her pure-white fur, sending the water flying in every direction. Afterwards, she lazily walked over to the left side of Michael's head and laid down, almost immediately losing consciousness.

Strangely enough, as soon as she did, time seemed to pass by at a ridiculous speed. Within what seemed like seconds to the floating, pitch-black willow-wisp, the Moon had disappeared from the sky, clouds were flying around at unreasonable speeds, and the birds, bats, bugs seemed like streaks of light; after a minute, the sun had already risen, and it was almost what he considered 'noon.'

The moment that Michael opened his eyes, everything slowed back to normal. He didn't have the 'Bleeding' debuff anymore, and both his health and stamina had reached their maximum capacity.

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Since normal humans typically had one or less Vitality and Endurance, they obviously would have died very swiftly under those circumstances, but he managed to survive. In fact, he even received a new passive skill called “Superior Regeneration Level 1.”

He couldn’t get something for nothing though; it was an ability that automatically drained mana, and he needed to be unconscious, or it wouldn’t work. However, considering that organs and bones could be completely restored in merely a few hours of sleep, it was definitely a very useful ability... for someone who couldn’t instantly respawn.

Essentially, that meant his appendix had regenerated, and taking another mana-core would most likely cause him to suffer from the same torment again. Michael woke up, feeling as if any sudden movement would make him lose control over his bowels and bladder at the same time; which was completely understandable, considering that he had been unconscious for at least twelve hours, and the last thing that he ate was raw rabbit-meat.

The still-naked man, stood up, and grumbled “Damn it... who the fuck wants to play a game where your avatar still has to piss and shit? Sigh, there’s no toilet paper... see, this is why people hate camping. Ugh, my neck, and back, why the hell did I fall asleep on a bunch of rocks anyway? Oh yea, I was expecting to die, so that I wouldn’t have to deal with any of this nonsense...” There were many large indents on his skin, from where the smooth stones were pressing against his body.

It took him a few minutes to find a suitable place to relieve himself, a hundred meters downstream from where he was before. Since he saw the sun rising, he assumed that, like Earth, that direction was east; unfortunately, that meant he couldn’t tell north from south.

However, while Michael wasn’t particularly amazing at video-games, he still had an abundance of knowledge and experience regarding them. While he was nonchalantly contaminating the river, he decided to open the ‘Map’ feature.

The first thing that appeared was a ‘World Map’ which was more like a holographic image of the entire planet, except that it was completely covered in a thick fog and he couldn’t see anything. He also managed to toggle it into a low-detail, two-dimensional screen, which looked a bit more like the kind that he was used to.

Unfortunately, it was entirely obscured, and even the area that he had explored so far, looked like a little dot. If it didn’t show what he could see from two-miles up, as a wisp, then he probably wouldn’t have been able to find out where to zoom-in.

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That grassy-deathtrap where he had started out in was called “Ariel’s Meadow” and north of that was “Carrabelle Plains.” Apparently, he was somewhere in the middle, squatting in a shallow stream.

He muttered “Hmmm, how do I activate the ‘Mini-Map’ though? Ah, there it is! Adjust size to... yeah, that looks good. Let’s see, there’s gotta be a way to lower the opaque-ness... shit, it disappeared! Oh, that’s better, hahaha! Well, without something like this, I’d just be stuck wandering aimlessly forever; unable to tell where I had been, and just walking in circles until I learned some kind of flying magic... Wait a second, holy shit!”

Suddenly, the pitch-black wisp emerged from Michael’s still conscious body, and flew a dozen meters above and behind his head, before seemingly locking into place. He had discovered the ‘Third-Person Point of View’ function and immediately activated it, but after a few seconds he turned it off, while complaining “Nope, shitting in first-person is bad enough... It might be useful in some situations, but not being able to see out of my own eyes is kinda awkward if I’m trying to fight.”

Once he finished and washed himself off, he walked back to the riverbank where he discovered a quietly snoring Twin-Tailed Fox. It was about the size of a small dog, with a tiny snout, relatively large ears compared to its head; before evolving, it had been a fairly young red-fox, so its body shape and stature didn’t change much.

He snickered, then contemplated “Now, the question is whether or not I should feed it the ‘F’ rank mana-gem from my own corpse, or use that ‘Vicious Sparrow.’ Actually, I don’t want to accidentally kill her... There might be some kind of compatibility nonsense, or she might need to wait a few days before being able to evolve again. If it was a normal game, there would be a fucking tutorial, or I could just look up a strategy guide on the internet. Hmmm, probably best to take it slowly. Even if she doesn’t end up being perfect, it shouldn’t matter too much.”

His voice was quiet, but it still managed to wake-up the sleeping vixen, who proceeded to run back and forth along the riverbank a few times, before rubbing up against his left leg and rolling over on her back. Michael couldn’t help but say “Awww~, such a cute foxy.” while crouching down and scratching near her neck right his right hand; the whole time she was nibbling on his palm, while making a whining noise.

Then he asked “Are you hungry Inari? Okay, which do you like better... the bunny or the rat?” as he stopped playing with her, and accessed his extra-dimensional bag. The

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vixen obviously had no idea what he was talking about, and just stared up at him with an absent-minded look on her tiny face.

As soon as he pulled out the carcasses, she immediately became extremely excited, and got up on all fours, while yelping a few times. Michael placed the rabbit to his left, and the giant field-mouse to his right; both of them were level-one magical-beasts.

After pacing back and forth for a few seconds, she finally decided on the white-furred bunny and began eating heartily. The vixen growled as she tore it apart and eventually became sated, though she wasn't able to consume everything, since there was simply far too much food.

When she was finished filling her stomach, only then did she move on to the mana-core. Immediately upon consuming it, her body was enveloped in a bright radiance, and then a status-screen popped up in front of his eyes. However, just like when he leveled up, he was also given the choice for how he wanted to spend the stat-points... though, there was only one.

[Companion Information

Name: Inari  
Titles:  
Level: 1  
Experience: 0/10  
Age: Child  
Race: Twin-Tailed Fox  
Rank: G  
Class: None  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

Health: 10/10  
Mana: 10/10  
Stamina: 5/5  
Mana Regen per minute: 10  
Health Regen per hour: 10

Strength: 1

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Vitality: 1  
Endurance: 1  
Dexterity: 1  
Agility: 2  
Intelligence: 2  
Wisdom: 1  
Perception: 1  
Charisma: 1

Willpower: 3  
Luck: 3  
Aura: .5

Attack Rating: 5  
Defense Rating: .5]

Surprisingly, he was allowed to split the single stat-point in half, and bring both the Vitality and Endurance of Inari up to one each. He remembered back to how the white-rabbits only had five HP, and figured that under normal circumstances, the little kit probably would have automatically stacked Agility and Intelligence, before anything else.

Michael wasn't planning on turning her into a 'Tank,' but he definitely didn't want the little twin-tailed fennec to instantly die the moment it received some kind of damage. Even if it could dodge more effectively if he gave it Agility, he felt that there wasn't a huge difference between two and three.

What he didn't realize, was that the reason his body didn't feel much different after doubling his own Agility, was because his weight had been kept in check, even after gaining so many more stats in Endurance, Strength and Vitality. Thus, he was still only two-hundred pounds, regardless of the massive increase in muscle and bone density.

Inari had become slightly heavier, but since there was no visual difference, he really couldn't tell. Michael did however realize, that unlike himself, the little fox didn't gain any extra stats.

As he was staring at her status-screen and quietly contemplating, he suddenly saw her experience bar jump to 1/10. While he had been distracted, she was tearing open the rat's head, and swallowing a mana-core.



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Then she looked up at him with anticipation, making whining noises, as if asking for more. Considering how ‘easily’ he was able to kill level-one mice and rabbits, he didn’t feel the need to stockpile them, so without thinking too deeply about it, he withdrew nine more bunnies.

## Chapter 8: Magic, so Easy A Trash Mob Could Learn It

[Companion Information]

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Name: Inari  
Titles:  
Level: 2  
Experience: 0/20  
Age: Child  
Race: Twin-Tailed Fox  
Rank: G  
Class: None  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

Health: 10/10  
Mana: 10/10  
Stamina: 5/5  
Mana Regen per minute: 10  
Health Regen per hour: 10

Strength: 1  
Vitality: 1  
Endurance: 1  
Dexterity: 1  
Agility: 3  
Intelligence: 2  
Wisdom: 1  
Perception: 1  
Charisma: 1

Willpower: 3  
Luck: 3  
Aura: .5

Attack Rating: 5  
Defense Rating: .5]

Once she finished devouring the nine mana-cores, Inari was once again enveloped in that dazzling radiance, and Michael had been given a stat-point to invest. Instead of continuing to bolster her Vitality and Endurance, he picked Agility, but didn't particularly notice any difference to her physique.

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Since the majority of the rabbit carcasses were still fairly intact, he stored them back into bag-slot four, and shoved the field-mouse into the second-slot. Then the adorable white-fox, stood on her hind legs, while scratching with her paws against his right thigh; she made some high-pitched whining noises, while licking his hand and the look in her crimson, vulpine eyes, made him say “Okay, okay, calm down, heh-heh... Aww, so cute~, hmm, I only have seven more level-one, rank-G cores left. I wonder if I can dismiss you?”

The moment that he thought about it, the tiny vixen suddenly vanished into thin-air, as if he put her into his bag-space. However, there was notification that read “Inari has entered Companion-slot one.”

When he tried to release her, there was a few seconds of lag-time before her body materialized in-front of him. She seemed extremely confused at first, but didn’t worry about it too much and ran up to him again, begging for more mana-cores.

Then he finally remembered something that he was trying to find out about the day before. He turned his right-hand facing upwards, and pulled the red, sock-eyed salmon out of his inventory.

As soon as it appeared, the fish flapped its body around, and escaped from his grasp, falling onto the startled fox, but dealing no visible damage to her health. Even after smacking against the smooth stones, it didn’t stop wiggling around violently, as its HP dropped down to 1/3 very quickly.

It still had freshly bleeding wounds, from when the ‘Hare-Bear’ caught it, so even if he had released it into the stream, it definitely wasn’t going to survive. Angry at the salmon that attacked her, Inari quickly pressed the slimy creature against the ground with her right paw, and used her tiny fangs to furiously chew its head off.

Michael sighed as he easily snatched the still twitching and bloody carcass away from her, while she growled loudly. Then he walked over to the stream and continued to rinse off the slippery remains.

Compared to the level-one, rank-G rabbits, that rank-less, level-zero salmon’s body seemed a lot more fragile to him. With his relatively long fingernails, the naked man was actually able to peel away the outer layer of scales: though it did take nearly ten minutes.

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In his original world, he had always bought fish that were already filleted and frozen, but he had seen sushi-chefs in action many times. Once it was properly rinsed off and scaled, he started casually using his teeth to remove chunks of delicious, but bloody, meat.

After he finished, Michael smirked and muttered “It’s been so~ long since the last time I was able to afford sashimi... Now, it’s time to power-level.” Most people would probably choose to find a nearby village or town, at least create some sort of shelter for a base-camp; however, he didn’t have to worry about safety or even survival, so he didn’t feel that there was a need to worry about anything like that.

Right when he was about to leave the riverbed, the naked man finally remembered “Oh yea! I should probably figure out how magic works first...” Since the little fox didn’t understand what he was talking to himself about, she just ran around his body and tried to get his attention.

After finding a rather large, smooth stone to sit upon, Michael began by gazing into the adorable vixen’s scarlet eyes, and trying to reproduce the effect of ‘Enthral’ by calmly and gently telling her “Inari, go play in the field over there, but be careful...” In every direction from that small stream was grasslands, for as far as he could see; there were plenty of colorful flowers, wild berries, vegetables, and even some small trees.

He could clearly see that there were no humanoids or magical-beasts wandering around, but there were some herds of wild cattle, horses, and other rather large animals grazing. It was much more peaceful than “Ariel’s Meadow,” so he wasn’t too worried about the fox getting into trouble.

Inari gazed into his brown eyes as he spoke, and listened to his voice... but had no idea what he was asking her to do. Michael didn’t properly activate the skill, because he didn’t understand how to utilize mana.

She just tilted her head and then yawned while stretching, but she eventually did wander off into the field. However, it wasn’t because he told her to, she was simply bored and wanted to run around over there.

After sighing dramatically, he started thinking about all the different types of magic and kinds of spells that he had used in video-games or read about in novels. Rather than creating a ball of fire, or a wind-blade, he was much more interested in pure telekinesis.

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Michael snickered for a few seconds, then muttered “I can’t imagine it costing more mana to pick up a little pebble with my mind, than to make one from scratch... Hmmm, okay, move... go damn it! Float in the air! For fuck’s sake, what the hell is mana anyway?! Urg, ugh, uhmmm~, sigh, it would be easier to just pick it up by hand...” He was obviously not a very patient person.

Most mages required years of practice, before they were able to actually utilize their spells in combat. However, that had more to do with the fact that people and animals weren’t born with a mana-core; therefore, they needed to either create their own, through training, or consume one that had already been formed.

Once a person or beast had a mana-core in their brain, then activating magic was as simple as imagining it. Even a random field-mouse could figure out how to channel mana into their claws and create a deadly skill.

Michael finally gave up on telekinesis and made a “Yiiii~!” sound, which was so loud and powerful that it actually made the pebble he was targeting explode. It was that same AoE spell “Deafening Noise Level 2,” but he focused it towards a specific location that was only a foot or two away.

He immediately started laughing hysterically, because it was the same kind of attack that practically made his whole head explode when used by a level-two grasshopper. Then he muttered “So that’s how it is... It’s kinda like breathing, or at least exhaling. I guess it’s better not to think about it, just do it.” while reaching out his right hand, towards a small stone that he could almost touch.

Michael smirked as he took a deep breath, and then he felt a slight tug on his whole body, but it wasn’t enough to move him; instead, the green rock rock lifted off the ground and smacked into the tip of his index finger, tearing off the nail and continued flying towards his face. However, just when it was about to punch a hole through his head, an invisible barrier appeared, followed by an emotionless female voice, which told him “Friendly Fire has been averted.”

The stone didn’t receive any damage, and just stopped an inch away from his left eye, before dropping down into his left hand. Staring at the mutilated finger, he couldn’t help but wonder “Is there a lag-time, or maybe it only stops severe injuries?” Then grimaced, while smacking the rock against his face lightly; there was no intervention.

He continued to bite his lip until it bled, strangulate himself, and scratched at the skin on his left leg intensely. However, no matter what he did, the maximum amount of damage

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he received was only one or two; considering that he had thirty-five health, and his regen was forty-per-hour, all the wounds were negligible. Of course, the horrible pain and agony was still there, so he definitely wasn't willing to test the theory of whether or not he could keep giving himself tiny injuries until he died.

Once he lost interest in that, and his mana had completely recovered, Michael picked a stone the size of his fist, and let it rest on his right palm. He took a deep breath, and then glared at the surface of the river, while imagining throwing the rock with all of his strength.

When he breathed out, the stone flew a dozen meters before smacking into the water and causing a rather large splash. He yelled "Holy shit!" because he was surprised at how simple and easy it was; the only problem was that it consumed all of his mana in one shot.

It was also impossible to tell how much damage an attack like that would actually do. After the momentary excitement passed, Michael complained "It would probably be easier to just stack strength and throw the fucking rock the old fashioned way."

[Spellbook

Deafening Noise Level 2: Create a high-pitched and extremely loud sound, infused with mana. Potency is dependent on the Aura stat.

Scan Level 1: Identifies the object and gives detailed information. Only effective on items below the common quality and the player's current level.

Intimidation Level 1: Instill fear into the target by releasing killing intent and using threatening language, infused with mana. Effectiveness is dependent on the level difference between the caster and the target. Potency is dependent on the Charisma stat.

Enthrall Level 1: Charm the target by speaking in a calm and gentle voice, infused with mana. Effectiveness is dependent on the level difference between the caster and the target. Potency is dependent on the Charisma stat.

Telekinesis Level 1: Manipulate objects by infusing them with mana. Potency is dependent on the Aura stat.]

## Chapter 9: A Cat-Eat-Fox World

Michael was irritated that none of his skills specified how much mana was required to cast, or to what degree they were affected by their dependent stats. However, since he was incredibly thirsty, he decided to test out 'Telekinesis.'

He was close enough to the flowing stream that he could literally put his hand into the water, so he wasn't too worried about the range being an issue. Unfortunately, since the spell required him to put his mana into the object first, the river was a bad target.

After collecting the liquid into his palm, then he imagined it flowing through the air and into his mouth. The first attempt expanded and splashed against his face, the second was too concentrated and smacked into the back of his throat with enough force to do three damage and make him choke on it for a few minutes.

It was simply way too difficult for him to use telekinesis to casually create a fountain of water, that would smoothly flow into his mouth. However, there was a different method that he thought of; after placing his hand in the stream, and pulling it out, there was a rather large blob of liquid attached to his palm.

The ball was similar to a massive globule, and he simply moved his hand until he could directly suck the fluid out of its telekinetic container. After drinking a decent amount, Michael grumbled "Ugh, I hate water... I really miss my iced tea."

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Then he had another idea, there was no need to conjure water, if he was able to just store it inside of his bag. Since slot-seven was empty, he shoved his hand into the river and began sucking copious amounts of the liquid into his inventory.

At first, he was just going to take a couple gallons or so, but Michael wanted to know the absolute limit to the bag-slots. However, the process was relatively slow, and extraordinarily monotonous, so after twenty minutes he stopped.

Five-hundred gallons seemed like enough to last him awhile, and even if he dehydrated to death, he could just respawn. Suddenly, he felt a sharp pain throughout his entire body, as if he was being electrocuted.

Michael didn't collapse, but he did receive a 'stunned' debuff, and his health dropped down to 25/35. Then there was a red notification, which read "Inari has died; respawning directly into companion storage, now."

Once he was able to move again, he turned around and tried to see what could have killed her. Then he muttered "Of course, it's a fucking cougar. Sigh, seriously, it wasn't even a magical beast... Well, now it is."

Michael was gazing at a big-cat that had tan fur, and an overall appearance very similar to a female lion. As he watched it eating a small, white, dog-like carcass, its body suddenly became twice as large, and its upper fangs became too long and wide to fit inside of its mouth anymore. Above its head was text that read "Level-5, Rank-G, Sabertooth Cougar: 60/60 HP."

He wondered "How the hell do animals or magical-beasts gain experience, aside from eating mana-cores?" as he started to reach down and shove random, fist-sized, smooth stones into his eighth bag-slot. Once he reached fifty-pounds, the nudist stopped and started walking towards the hulking feline.

With a small pebble in his right hand, he smirked, while muttering "Hopefully it doesn't run away..." Rather than flee, the rank-G monster immediately noticed Michael approaching, and roared loudly.

It was ecstatic; not only had the cougar finally managed to evolve, but there was even a weak and unarmed rank-F human for it to devour. If he was a higher level, then maybe the giant cat would have felt intimidated, but from its point of view, the naked man was an easy target.



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The feline's bright-blue eyes were glistening from the sunlight, and Michael frowned, while complaining "Why do I have to keep killing so many cute animals? Shouldn't they be a bit uglier?" Although he was walking towards it, the sabertooth-cat began sprinting at him from a hundred meters away.

Within a few seconds, it had come within range, and the naked man used all of his strength, plus fifteen points of mana, to physically and telekinetically throw a tiny rock at the cougar's head. After smacking into the tip of its nose, the pebble shattered the upper jaw, and cause the entire face to be deformed by the impact; of course, the stone had also been destroyed, and the shards managed to fly directly into the cougar's eyes.

A huge bright-yellow critical '-25' popped up above its head, and a slew of debuffs appeared, including: 'bleeding,' 'blinded,' 'stunned,' and 'Anosmia.' If he had just foolishly tried to punch the gigantic beast to death, Michael obviously would have been torn apart and killed; however, since it was so heavily disabled by that unexpected attack, he could casually use a fist-sized, smooth stone, to repeatedly bash open its skull.

The thirty-five health, was quickly reduced to zero after the fifth blow: The cougar's head was practically nonexistent at that point. After letting out a loud sigh, he dropped the blood and brain covered stone onto the grass, and called out Inari.

As soon as she appeared, the white fox was immediately terrified by the massive carcass and cowered behind Michael's left leg. He scolded her "Didn't I tell you to be careful? Geeze, if you weren't my companion, you would have been permanently dead..."

Obviously, Inari didn't understand anything that he was saying and just kept making loud whimpering noises. He raised his blood-stained right hand above his head and started releasing twenty gallons of water, which sprayed out like a low-pressured shower.

The cold liquid snapped the frightened vixen out of her 'terrified' debuff, and she immediately realized that the target of her fear was definitely dead. More importantly, she could smell the delicious rank-G mana-core, which was buried in the clump of fur, flesh, bones, teeth, and brain-matter, only a few feet away.

Without any hesitation, she happily ran over and started digging through the mess, dyeing her pure-white fur, a dark, grimy red. Michael smirked, as he continued to

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shower himself, while muttering “Hmmm, it’s a little early to know for sure, but it seems like killing a magical-beast at rank-G, gives one experience-point per level... assuming that ‘F’ gives two, then each higher rank might have a similar multiplier. How the hell did that bastard get to level five though? Sigh, why isn’t there a tutorial? It’s very strange, but maybe it has to do with the ‘hardcore’ setting?”

After he finished spraying water over his body, using his palm as a pseudo shower-head, he continued to complain “Ugh, I’m probably expected to go to some shitty village and ask the senile old man, who for some reason is their leader, to tell me how the world works... Nope, fuck that, I don’t want to deal with people until I’m strong enough to kill them all. That Goblin-girl was really cute though... Oh yea! This is a fantasy-style world, so there are probably all kinds of awesome races... and most of them probably hate Humans.”

Once he was finished making completely baseless assumptions, and asking a slew of questions to himself, Michael shoved the giant 'Sabertooth-Cougar' carcass into his eighth bag-slot: It had only been two days, but he had already halfway filled it. Then he turned around, after hearing a crunching noise coming from nearby.

It took him a few seconds, but he found an inconspicuous white-rabbit, nibbling on some kind of root. From what he could tell, it looked like a potato, but it was throbbing like a beating heart and glowing dimly.

As the bunny chewed into it, a thick, clear sap leaked out, and eventually, when it finally reached the center of the oblong vegetable, he could see an incredibly tiny seed. The bead-shaped object was crystalline and sparkling brightly in the sunlight.

When the rabbit ate that seed, its name changed from white to red; the health jumped from two to five, and it went from unranked to ‘G’ instantaneously. The level was still zero, but it quickly and easily discovered another one of those roots buried nearby, and after digging it up, then devouring it, the little magical-beast sniffed the air a few times.

Then those bright-red eyes glared directly at Michael, but seemingly realizing the difference in strength, it immediately turned away and ran towards “Ariel’s Meadow.” It could feel an incredibly powerful force luring it there, and so tried to go there... but before it could hop a few meters, Inari sprinted over and chomped down onto its neck.

The tiny fox, which was still dyed red, jerked her head back and forth, severing the rabbit’s spine and dealing a bright orange, six-points of damage. She didn’t use any mana or special attacks, just physical force, but it was still extremely effective.

Michael smirked and praised “Good girl!” as she devoured the mana-core and received a single experience point. After that, Inari picked up the remains in her mouth and happily brought it over to him, dropping it by his left foot.

Thus, his stockpile of headless level-one, white-rabbit carcasses had increased to ten, and they had to return to the river so that she could remove all the blood from her fur. He also collected five-hundred and twenty more gallons of water, since there didn’t seem to be a limit.

## Chapter 10: It’s a Hardcore World

Forming bonds with animals, by feeding them mana-cores, was a fairly common practice. Typically, it would require a ‘Beast Tamer’ class first, and if the person’s companion died, they wouldn’t be able to sacrifice their own health to revive it.

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Michael was a 'Player' and not an 'NPC,' so he was given a myriad of completely overpowered and unreasonable abilities to make his experience more entertaining. It wouldn't be a very fun game, if the 'Companions' he made could be permanently killed.

Rather than 'permadeath,' 'Hardcore' difficulty referred to the way that damage was calculated. On 'Easy,' all base stats would be dramatically increased: not just for the 'Players,' but also the 'NPCs.' The 'Game' was balanced, but he was the only one actually playing it; everyone else, was struggling to stay alive.

Obviously, there was a symbiotic relationship between a 'Beast Tamer' and their 'Companions.' The humanoid gained experience as long as they were within a few hundred meters when any of the kills were made, but the magical-beast was usually able to consume many more mana-cores than they would on their own.

There was one quirk though, which was affected by the bond: 'Evolution.' To rank-up, the mana-core has to be given to them by their partner, from something that their partner personally killed; otherwise, they would only gain increased stats.

However, the changes to their body, rather than following their 'natural' path, would be influenced by the traits and attributes of whatever the mana-core had been taken from. Depending on the Beast Tamer's Luck, there was also a possibility of failure: though the chance was typically very small.

Essentially, the 'Luck' stat would determine how powerful the evolution would be, and the higher the rank, the more dangerous the evolution would become. Michael had no idea about any of that nonsense, and simply removed his level-two corpse out of his inventory; after leaving it on the riverbank, he looked at the little fox and said "What are you waiting for? Eat it." while pointing at the deathly pale face.

Since it was from the time that he died of a bacterial infection, he was almost certain that Inari would become ill, but he wasn't worried about it. She already died once, and all it cost him was a bit of excruciating pain; there was also the high probability that she would gain a disease resistance passive, so he didn't think too deeply about it.

After realizing that the vixen didn't understand, he picked up a relatively heavy stone off the ground and used it to bash open 'his' lifeless head. He stored the body almost immediately after it died, so there was very little decomposition in the areas that weren't infected; after literally digging through his own brain, he pulled out a rank-F mana-core.

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Michael tossed the tiny bead in-front of Inari and told her “There, eat it, okay?” before storing the corpse back inside of his inventory. She hesitated for a moment, but eventually scooped it up with her little pink tongue, and swallowed it. He impatiently waited for a few seconds, but then asked “Nothing happened? Maybe it’s some kind of countermeasure to prevent players from farming their own mana-cores?”

After a minute, there was a notification that read: “Inari’s stats have increased after digesting a level-two, rank-F human’s mana-core: Aura +.5, Strength +1.5.” Her outer appearance didn’t change, but there was a significant stat-boost.

The vixen didn’t receive any visible illnesses, and her health wasn’t dropping, so he figured that she wasn’t infected with anything. Michael immediately pulled out the crow-sized ‘Vicious Sparrow’ from bag-slot three and tossed it in front of the excited fox.

Without him even saying anything, Inari began tearing open the bird’s head and quickly devoured the level-two, rank-F, mana-core. There was an instantaneous transformation, as her body grew to the size of an adult red-fox, but maintained the same proportions: Her age was still ‘child.’

Then, a third tail emerged along-side the two fluffy-white ones; it was completely covered in soft, brown, black and grey feathers. The three of them waved back and forth, as the fur on her legs darkened, until it was obsidian, but there were no other significant changes.

A message popped up in front of Michael, which read: “You have successfully evolved Inari into a Triple-Tailed Fox. Base stats have increased based on your luck and the ‘Vicious Sparrow’ that the mana-core originally belonged to: Aura +.5, Agility +1, Perception +1.”

[Companion Information

Name: Inari  
Titles:  
Level: 2  
Experience: 6/20  
Age: Child  
Race: Triple-Tailed Fox  
Rank: F  
Class: None  
Specialization: None

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Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

Health: 10/10

Mana: 10/10

Stamina: 5/5

Mana Regen per minute: 10

Health Regen per hour: 10

Strength: 2.5

Vitality: 1

Endurance: 1

Dexterity: 1

Agility: 4

Intelligence: 2

Wisdom: 1

Perception: 2

Charisma: 1

Willpower: 3

Luck: 3

Aura: 1.5

Attack Rating: 12.5

Defense Rating: .5]

Michael groaned, and then muttered “Good thing I didn’t test this shit on myself. Ugh, starting out at rank-F, means that I missed two chances to evolve with the best possible mana-cores... Sigh, I’m such a noob; I actually gave her a shitty white-rabbit to evolve the first time, and now a miscellaneous ‘Vicious Sparrow.’ Well, as far as pets go, in the end-game, I can probably find some kind of super-rare dragon, and just feed it the best quality cores that I could get. The most important thing is my own body... Wait a fucking second, in the end, aren’t I still completely naked? These are all just base-stats; in these kinds of games, the only thing that ever really matters is the gear. It’s actually kinda amazing that I can even kill level-one rabbits with just my base-stats.”

Indeed, the only reason that he was able to defeat anything without equipment, was because of the ‘Hardcore’ difficulty, in the settings. A ‘normal’ adventurer with decent

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weapons and armor, would have been able to compete with a monster that was a rank above them; at higher levels it was an even more extreme difference.

By just using a generic stone, rather than his bare hands, Michael was able to do far more damage. Utilizing magical spells and skills was equally important, so most people would have to train for years, before venturing out into the wilderness and hunting monsters.

The newly evolved Triple-Tailed Fox, quickly ran up to the naked man and pounced a few feet off the ground, tackling his chest. He easily caught Inari's surprisingly light body, and asked her "Who's my adorable glass-cannon? Aww, so cute~, eww, hey, bad doggy... ugh, don't slobber all over my face."

Just like a happy puppy that was given a lot of delicious food by a human, the young vixen was already rather attached to Michael. However, she didn't even understand how truly 'lucky' or 'unfortunate' she was, because her mind was still far too underdeveloped to comprehend her precarious situation.

After a few seconds of that, his health suddenly started plummeting; he received a 'stunned' and 'bleeding' debuff. Blood started dripping from his left nostril, and his eyes rolled upwards, as he collapsed onto the ground, with a confused fox barking and jumping around his body.

The moment he died and looked at the state of his corpse, the pitch-black wisp sighed dramatically. Then he wondered "Was it poison? Could be an aneurysm, or maybe it was a side-effect from eating those mana-cores? In that case, it's basically all of the above... I don't see any wounds, so I probably wasn't attacked. Oh wait, it could be magic though... Nope, there isn't really anywhere for them to hide. Well, I've always had horrible headaches, so maybe it was just some kind of... wait a second, maybe it was from mana-exhaustion?"

Casually respawning, Michael managed to terrify Inari by his sudden appearance. Even a magical beast would think it was strange and unnatural, but something like that was just common-sense for any gamer from his world.

As he examined the corpse more thoroughly, he couldn't find any external injuries, but he wasn't exactly an expert on the subject. With a deep sigh, he stored the body into bag-slot one, and moved on with his life.

## Chapter 11: Noob-Quest

It was still the middle of the day when Michael arrived at the outskirts of “Ariel’s Meadow.” Between himself and Inari, they were able to kill the white-rabbits surprisingly fast, and within an hour, the adorable fox finally ate the fourteenth level-one, rank-G mana-core.

### [Companion Information

Name: Inari  
Titles:  
Level: 3  
Experience: 0/30  
Age: Child  
Race: Triple-Tailed Fox  
Rank: F  
Class: None  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Unemployed]

### [Stats



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Health: 20/20  
Mana: 10/10  
Stamina: 10/10  
Mana Regen per minute: 10  
Health Regen per hour: 20

Strength: 2.5  
Vitality: 2  
Endurance: 2  
Dexterity: 1  
Agility: 4  
Intelligence: 2  
Wisdom: 1  
Perception: 2  
Charisma: 1

Willpower: 3  
Luck: 3  
Aura: 1.5

Attack Rating: 12.5  
Defense Rating: 1]

This time, instead of only a single stat-point, he was able to invest two. He muttered “Hmmm, if ‘G’ is one per level, and ‘F’ is two, then ‘E’ would either be three or four... probably three. Otherwise, at rank-SSS it would end up being like five-hundred and twelve, so it’s most likely only one more per rank, to keep it relatively balanced.” Michael’s guess was correct, but he wouldn’t be able to know for certain, until he tested it out himself.

After storing the fourteenth rabbit’s carcass, he sighed and glanced at Inari, who was using her paws to dig-up something out of the ground. It took a few seconds, but she managed to find a mysterious ‘item’ that had been buried there for many years.

Michael’s initial response was “Oh hey, a legendary ring...” but when she proudly used her mouth to ‘hand’ it to him, he received a pop-up message: “New Quest: You have found an unidentifiable ancient artifact. If you bring this to the Lorekeeper in Riverside Village, you will be able to receive some compensation. Reward: One experience point and one copper coin.”

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He couldn't help but complain "Well, that actually makes a little more sense, since this is the starting zone. I mean, any dumb-ass that died to one of these fluffy bunnies, probably didn't have any decent equipment in the first place. Hmmm, yea, this thing looks like it's made out of tin... Although, I'm pretty sure it's still a rip-off. This thing is a fucking antique, one copper coin is probably worth less than a penny."

However, the reason why the quest reward was so ridiculously low, was because those 'artifacts' were so easily found. While he was talking to himself, Inari had managed to find an old, broken, bronze necklace-chain, only a dozen meters away from where she found that ring.

The vixen quickly brought it over to Michael, and when he touched it, his quest was updated. When the reward doubled, he realized that if a person at level one found ten of them, they didn't even have to strangle or crush a single adorable bunny to death.

Unfortunately, in order to finish the quest, he would have to return the items to a place called "Riverside Village." Even though, when he opened up his full map, the location was marked with a large yellow star, he could tell that it was at least five-miles to the northeast.

Considering that he was barefoot, and wanted to completely avoid 'Human' contact, he didn't think that it would be worth the effort. When Michael tried to put the ring in his inventory, he noticed that his bag-slots had doubled.

On the left side, all of the boxes were black, while on the right, they were golden. It wasn't difficult for him to understand that he had unlocked some sort of special, Quest-Item Storage.

It didn't only operate as bag-space, but also allowed him to open the quest's details and progress. Unlike the regular bag, he was able to place both the necklace and the ring inside of the same slot.

Even if he didn't particularly care about the quest, Michael still crouched down and pet Inari's fur while praising "Good girl, you're such an adorable foxy~." She was filthy and covered with dirt, but he didn't waste any water trying to wash her off, because it would have been pointless.

While they were distracted, a small finch swooped down and embedded itself in the left side of his neck. He quickly grabbed the bird's body with both hands and squeezed,

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until its head literally popped off; the fox immediately chased after the level-two, rank-G mana-core, leaving Michael's side, as he was swiftly bleeding to death.

A second after he collapsed onto the ground and died, he respawned and quickly stored his corpse in bag-slot one: It had actually become a habit. Michael breathed out a long sigh, as he saw a large white "+2 Exp" pop-up in his peripheral vision.

His stamina had almost been depleted, but his new body wasn't even slightly tired. Unfortunately, Inari was exhausted and wanted to rest. When she returned to him, the three-tailed vixen looked like she was going to pass-out, so he was about to call it a day; until he remembered that he could just dismiss her.

Once the adorable fox was stored in companion-slot one, the lone Human began trudging southward. Preparing for the inevitable he took out a fist-sized, smooth-stone, and listened to his surroundings carefully.

The two-foot high grass was rustling all around, and he could constantly hear various animal cries, screeching, the chirping of giant crickets, and plenty of other irritating noises. He could even see in the distance, large birds and insects flying around in the sky, slaughtering each-other.

It was definitely not a peaceful location; since all the magical-beasts were constantly fighting to survive, level-up, and evolve. Only a small number of the animals actually targeted Michael, compared to the vast amount of little monsters that were hiding in the grass.

There was a quiet hissing, as he felt something smooth rub against his right foot. With a loud "Holy shit!" he quickly jumped backwards, narrowly avoiding a horrible and painful death.

Poison was definitely one of the worst ways to die, so he sincerely wanted to avoid it. Suddenly, a rather large brown cobra, popped its head out of the grass and sprayed a decent amount of mana-infused venom towards his face.

Even though he was able to block it with his left arm, the skin started sizzling and melting off, as he received a 'corrosion' debuff. While yelling "Oh, for fuck's sake!" he pitched a stone towards the relatively large head, and used telekinesis to make sure that there was enough force behind the blow, to kill the snake in one shot.

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Unfortunately, his attack was avoided, due to the fact that the creature could clearly tell what he was going to do. After the rock missed, the serpent slithered up his left leg and bit down on his groin, sending a terrible poison surging through his whole body.

As soon as Michael fell onto his back, the snake slithered up to his face and sprayed some more of that acidic venom into his left eye-socket. The level-three 'Spitting Cobra' was a rank-G magical-beast, so when it plunged into the hole that it melted through his skull, and devoured his mana-core, it evolved.

However, he had learned from his experience with a certain 'Vicious Sparrow,' that while they're evolving, that's when magical-beasts were the most vulnerable. Respawned the moment that he died, Michael reached down and grabbed the rapidly growing serpent around its relatively large head and yanked it up towards his face, before using his teeth as a weapon and biting down into the creature's smooth scales.

He didn't target the head, but the spine, so that it wouldn't instantly die. After paralyzing the snake, its body became twice as large, and turned a dark-red color; it was called a 'Blood Cobra,' and had its maximum health increase from ten to twenty.

Once he was sure that it was finished changing, Michael squeezed down on its neck with both hands, and nearly twisted the head completely off. The moment it died, he immediately placed it into bag-slot three, and then stored his core-less corpse with the others.

[Bag

Slot-1: Michael's Human(F) Level 1(Core-less): 3; Level 2(Core-less): 3; Level 3: 2;  
Level 3(Core-less): 1

Slot-2: Field Mice Level 1: 6; Level 1(Core-less): 1

Slot-3: Blood Cobra Level 3(F): 1

Slot-4: White Rabbits(G) Level 1: 1; Level 1(Core-less): 24

Slot-5: Small Jagged Rocks: 20 lbs

Slot-6: Leather Strips: 6

Slot-7: Freshwater: 1000 gallons

Slot-8: Smooth Stones: 50 lbs

Slot-9: Sabertooth Cougar(G) lvl 5(Core-less): 1]

After sighing dramatically, he muttered "I wonder if I'll get another title after dying four more times?" while walking eastward.

## Chapter 12: Worms Are Hard to Kill

“Ow, shit, damn-it, argh! Just die already, you fucking bastard!” Shortly after his deadly encounter with the cobra, Michael stumbled upon an earthworm.

It was only a rank-G, level-one magical-beast, so he figured that it would be an easy target for him to acquire the single point of experience that he needed to level-up. Unfortunately, it wasn't nearly as defenseless as it appeared.

Every time he tried to stomp on it, the slimy creature managed to wiggle out of the way, if he threw a rock, he missed or did less than two points of damage, and whenever he was almost about to kill it, the beast burrowed underground and escaped. He had been wandering through the northwestern part of the grasslands for over an hour, but the only monsters he found were worm-related.

The sun was setting, and it was getting harder for him to even see the snake-like magical-beasts that would cut at his ankles and calves with sharp barbs. The 'Blood Worms' were rank-F and even had a health-stealing, blood-sucking attack; when the thick, mucus-covered, crimson monster wrapped its body around his right leg, Michael immediately attempted to use a small and jagged rock to stab at the creature, but did no damage.

While pointlessly attacking and cursing at the vicious enemy, his life was steadily draining away. However, as he was approaching death for the eleventh time, the naked man gathered mana into the palms of his hands and pressed them against the slimy demon's 'head.'

Michael began laughing hysterically, as he yelled “Lightning Bolt!” while imagining that horrible feeling he had experienced when Inari died. The 'Blood Worm' suddenly started spasming uncontrollably as its flesh was becoming crispy, and the lower half of its body even exploded.

Even though he properly cast the spell, he ended up using his entire mana-pool in the process, and was down to 2/35 HP, until a warm light enveloped his body, and he

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received the “You have reached level-four.” notification. Upon leveling-up, all Health, Mana, and Stamina was restored to full, and all debuffs would be removed instantly.

[Player Information

Name: Michael  
Titles: The Nudist, The Noob, The Immortal  
Level: 4  
Experience: 3/40  
Age: Adult  
Race: Human  
Rank: F  
Class: None  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

Health: 40/40  
Mana: 15/15  
Stamina: 20/20  
Mana Regen per minute: 20  
Health Regen per hour: 40

Strength: 4  
Vitality: 4  
Endurance: 4  
Dexterity: 3  
Agility: 4  
Intelligence: 3  
Wisdom: 2  
Perception: 1  
Charisma: 1

Willpower: 14  
Luck: 14  
Aura: 1.8

Attack Rating: 20  
Defense Rating: 2]

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He chose to increase his Strength and Endurance by one each, which raised his Stamina, Health, and ability to deal physical damage by a decent amount. Michael grumbled “Damn it, I should probably stop this shit now... Ugh, I’m so tired of dying. Thirty seven level-one rabbits would be way easier than fucking around with worms. All that trouble, and I only got four experience from it. Also, what the hell’s up with this damn spell anyway? Even if it doesn’t damage my own Health, it still feels like I’m getting tasered...”

[Spellbook

Deafening Noise Level 2: Create a high-pitched and extremely loud sound, infused with mana. Every point of mana is equivalent to one meter of range. Potency is dependent on the Aura stat.

Scan Level 2: Identifies the object and gives detailed information. Only effective on items below the uncommon quality and the caster’s current Level.

Intimidation Level 1: Instill fear into the target by releasing killing intent and using threatening language, infused with mana. Effectiveness is dependent on the Level difference between the caster and the target. Potency is dependent on the Charisma stat.

Enthrall Level 1: Charm the target by speaking in a calm and gentle voice, infused with mana. Effectiveness is dependent on the Level difference between the caster and the target. Potency is dependent on the Charisma stat.

Telekinesis Level 1: Manipulate objects by infusing them with mana. Potency is dependent on the Aura stat.

Electrocution Level 1: Transforms mana directly into alternating current and channels it through the caster’s body, dealing lightning damage to enemies that are in physical contact with the caster’s skin. Potency is dependent on the Willpower stat.]

After storing the Blood Worm’s corpse in bag-slot number ten, he finally decided “Damn it, I might as well go to that shitty starting-village and turn in my quest... I’ll probably make more money from selling all these carcasses though. Sigh, hopefully I won’t get arrested for indecent exposure.”

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He didn't want his inventory to become completely full and have to get rid of something: Even though, four of the spots were just taken up by rocks, water, and six leather-strips. On his way out of the grasslands, he didn't encounter any rabbits or other low-leveled magical-beasts, because they desperately tried to avoid him.

It wasn't like a videogame, where the mindless monsters would even attack maximum-leveled players, without a hint of hesitation. Humanoids were able to gauge their enemies strength by using information gathering magic, which allowed them to see what players would, and magical-beasts would only attack an enemy that they sensed was weaker than them.

Unlike Michael, no one would risk their life, fighting bare-handed, alone, and completely naked against enemies that were stronger than themselves. Adventurers formed parties, even if they were only hunting prey that they could solo, because the biggest danger wasn't from the monsters.

While the naked man was slowly walking towards 'Riverside Village,' he was constantly moaning, groaning and complaining about all the sharp rocks. His injuries would heal fairly quickly, but the pain and discomfort wouldn't dull.

Typically, there would be some sort of resistance to cope with just about anything terrible that could happen to a person, but the requirements were never easy. In fact, since he had only been 'playing' in that world for less than forty-eight hours, it was impressive that he managed to make so much progress. Although, most of the NPCs had been 'living' there for years, so he was still relatively weak as far as skills went.

In regard to stats however, Michael had gained quite a lot of them. The majority of adventurers were rank-G, and most of the differences came from their levels. Very few people would be reckless enough to consume mana-cores to gain an advantage, and equipment was the true key to power.

Since he was just mindlessly walking, Michael decided to switch to third-person PoV. The most interesting thing that he discovered, was that he could consciously unlock his wisp-form and fly around wherever he wanted, while his body was still semi-consciously moving in the same direction.

He couldn't help but wonder "Am I still controlling it, or has some sort of AI taken over in my absence?" Aside from sight and hearing, all of his senses were still coming from the



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naked Human, but the floating ball of darkness could view and listen to things that were up to two miles away: even underground.

In the middle of the moonlit night, a strange man was singing incredibly loudly, while slowly approaching a peaceful village by the Archean River. There were only a total of seventeen small single-story buildings, made out of straw and dried mud.

While Michael's body was half a mile away and making lots of noise, his eyes and ears were actually already in the destination, scouting it out. His first thought was "Wow, they might as well be living in caves... I think that would actually be an improvement. Well, there's nothing but plains and grassland for miles, so it's not like they could get lumber. Hmm, it seems like they're pretty casual huh, they don't even have someone on guard-duty?"

Then he felt a sharp pain in his lower-back, followed by a dull throbbing, as he yelled "Ow, shit, seriously!? What the hell's your problem?!" Upon receiving damage, his sight and hearing immediately returned to his eyes and ears.

Standing around him were five, relatively small, green-skinned humanoids, three females and two males. Each of them were wearing crudely made leather armor and had either daggers or bows, but even though they were all around level three-to-five, only one of them had a rank.

Michael had fallen to his knees, while receiving a 'paralyzed' debuff, so he had to look upward to see their faces. However, he smirked at the Goblin-girl that he actually recognized, and casually said "Oh hey, it's been awhile, Sarah."

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## Arc 2: Death Count Rising

## Chapter 13: The Murderous Thief

The young Thief scowled and glared at Michael with her bright-blue eyes, before swiftly delivering a roundhouse kick to the left side of his face. Strangely enough, her attack, which was using all of her strength, had only shaved off three of his health-points.

Sarah immediately yelled “Shut the fuck up, Human!” NPCs generally needed to learn special skills to see damage numbers, health-bars, names and other similar information, but as long as they were at least rank-G, they could feel the general rank and level of a person or magical-beast: as long as it wasn’t too much higher than them.

Compared to the pain from the wound in his lower-back, that light kick didn’t even sting. Michael sighed, and told her “You’re really cute, but I’m not really looking for a relationship right now.”

After hearing that, the relatively young, male-Goblin who had originally stabbed him in the back, was preparing to aim a little higher, but their apparent leader shouted “Stop! We need him alive... so just use your fists!” Then the five of them began viciously beating on the paralyzed man, who was only receiving -1’s and -2’s from each strike.

“Resist Paralysis” reached level-two from being poisoned, but it didn’t allow him to move his body, only to feel the pain from their weak attacks. Eventually, he yelled “Ow, ouch, damn it, you fuckers are really starting to piss me off!” while channeling mana into his vocal cords and activating “Intimidation.”

Sarah wasn’t affected at all, but the others received a ‘terrified’ debuff, and lost control of their bodies. They couldn’t even scream, as the level-three girl wet herself, and the level-two man fainted.

Michael’s Health had reached 17/40, and his Stamina was only 5/20, so if they had continued to beat on him, he would have lost consciousness rather than dying. The paralysis had worn off, so he was finally able to stand upright and look down upon Sarah, while tightening his relatively large muscles, and telling her “If you keep this shit up, I’m going to start killing people.”

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The conscious unranked Goblins received a 'fear' debuff and immediately abandoned her, while engaging their cloaking spell and disappearing into the darkness. Then she smirked, while pulling out her two daggers, and quietly said "I challenge you to a duel."

Upon hearing those words, a message popped-up in front of his face: "Sarah, the rank-G, level-five, Goblin Thief, has challenged you to an 'Evolution Duel.' If you win, you will directly absorb her mana-core and gain a stat-bonus. If you lose, you will die, and your rank will decrease to 'G' after respawning: Stats will permanently decrease by one point, per level, though you can choose which to lose."

While reading that, Michael muttered "Hmmm, so that's how humanoids are supposed to rank-up, huh. Well, the question is whether I can regain the four stat-points after evolving again... Nope, not worth the risk." He sighed dramatically, then told Sarah "Nah, I'll pass."

The message disappeared, and Sarah scowled while glaring at him, as she tightened the grip on her daggers, while shouting "If you won't duel me, then I'll just kill you!" Her body vanished into a cloud of black mist, but then reappeared behind his back, jumped a few feet into the air, and stabbed both of the knives into his neck.

They were each extremely close together at first, but then she pulled her arms outward and tore open both jugulars and carotid arteries, not to mention all the muscles. However, the most vicious part of her attack, was that she purposefully avoided damaging his spinal cord, so that he would be able to feel it all.

Her daggers were both coated in a 'Deadly Poison,' but it was completely unnecessary, because he died within moments of receiving that strike. The moment his lifeless body hit the ground, a raspy, masculine voice roared "Sarah! What have you done!?"

A five-foot tall, muscular, dark-green skinned man, with grey hair, bright-blue eyes, and thick leather armor, rushed over, carrying relatively large battle-axe in his left hand. Above his head were the words: "Lorekeeper Jonathan, Level-15 Hobgoblin Warrior, Rank-F, Elite."

The pitch-black wisp muttered "Hmmm, only two-hundred HP? That seems really low, but he probably stacks strength, so he's most-likely a glass-cannon. Although, there's no way I could overcome that kinda level gap, plus the fact that he's 'Elite.' I wonder if that's limited to 'NPCs' or if 'Players' can also become 'Bosses' in this game-world?"

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Jonathan's face had a few wrinkles, and a thick and curly black beard, so it was easy to tell that he was at least 'middle-aged' and approaching the point where he would start becoming elderly. Looking back and forth between the nearly decapitated Human corpse, and the dagger-wielding Thief, who was smirking, his expression was gloomy.

The Lorekeeper sighed, while 'calmly' asking Sarah "Why, for what reason did you kill this unarmed and completely naked man?" It obviously wasn't the first time that the young woman had taken a life.

She crouched down by Michael's head and sheathed one dagger, while stabbing the other into the back of his skull. With a bit of mana imbued into her weapon, she twisted and popped the top-half of his cranium open, then casually reached inside with her tiny left hand, and pulled out a rank-F mana-core. Then she casually explained "I challenged him to a duel, but he didn't accept, so now I have to do things the hard way."

Immediately realizing what she was about to do, Jonathan shouted "No, stop!" but he was too late to prevent her from putting the little bead in her mouth and swallowing. However, before she had a chance to digest it, a completely naked, pale-skinned and muscular human suddenly appeared and delivered a heavy knee to her stomach.

The surprised Goblin-girl uncontrollably vomited out the mana-core, along with her dinner, as she tumbled backwards and rolled across the grass a half-dozen meters. Michael yelled "Eww, so~ gross! I think I'm gonna throw-up... Ugh, nope, can't do it, I refuse! I'd rather die! Anyway, payback bitch! Hahahaha~!"

A huge '-7' appeared above her head, and dropped her health down to 8/15, while she also received a 'stunned' debuff. Watching that scene, even the battle-hardened Warrior was surprised and confused; he clearly saw the same man's corpse laying on the ground, yet there was now two of them.

His first thought was "Maybe they're twins?" but then it moved onto "Probably a doppelganger..." Yet, his knowledge as the Lorekeeper of Riverside Village, gave him records regarding the ancient era, and the beings which existed back then. Jonathan cautiously asked "Young Human... are you perhaps, from another world?"

Hearing that question, Michael casually turned to face the old Hobgoblin and answered "Yep, pretty much. Oh yea, here's some shitty relics that I came here to give to you..." as he made the small tin ring, and broken necklace appear in his right palm. Jonathan was dumbfounded, and almost couldn't catch the priceless artifacts that were nonchalantly tossed at his leather chest-armor.

A '+2 Exp, +2 C' popped up but the quest was still ongoing, since there were many other ancient Riverside heirlooms buried in that starting zone. Considering how 'realistic' the world was, Michael was actually surprised that he immediately received the two copper coins directly into his inventory; in fact, the official quest reward wasn't even given to him by the Lorekeeper.

The old Hobgoblin examined the two items and immediately asked "These... where did you find these?" There were a few markings on the ring and necklace-chain, so he had a rough idea from what families they had belonged to.

Michael sighed dramatically, then explained "Five-ish miles south of here, they were buried a few inches under the dirt. Ummm, Ariel's Meadow... the place with all the killer rabbits. Ugh, sigh, what's up with the difficulty of this place anyway? I would normally rage-quit after dying so many times in the beginning of a game... but I kinda doubt that I have that option here. Well, whatever, do you guys have like... an inn or something? All I see are a bunch of huts made out of sticks and mud; is that a goblin thing, or are you guys just really poor?"

Before Jonathan had the chance to respond, the naked man reached down and touched his own corpse for an instant, before it suddenly disappeared. He was a relatively powerful Warrior in the region, but any sort of teleportation or instantaneous destruction magic was able to both amaze and terrify him.

However, as he looked behind the naked man, his gaze fell upon the Goblin-girl who was already preparing to retaliate. The Lorekeeper furiously shouted at her "Sarah! Go home, now! Go!" before turning to Michael and bowing his head, while saying "Please, otherworlder, if you wish to punish someone for my daughter's actions... It is my fault as her father, and as this village's elder. I cannot allow myself or anyone else in Riverside to die because of her foolishness, but please tell me if there is anything I can do to apologize on her behalf."

## Chapter 14: Abusing Wisp-Mode

Michael snickered as he casually walked past the bowing Hobgoblin, while glancing around at the various huts. The largest building at the center of the village, obviously belonged to Jonathan, and that was where the little murderous Thief scampered off to.

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He sighed dramatically, then told the old man “I’ve died eleven times in the past two days... I need a fucking break. Are all of these houses occupied? I don’t have ‘money,’ but I do have a shit-ton of food to trade. Aside from shelter, weapons and armor would be nice... I can supply the ingredients, but I assume that someone here has a few crafting skills; otherwise, where the hell did all the gear you’re using come from? By the way, I saw your daughter pick up the mana-core out of her vomit earlier...”

Hearing that last sentence, Jonathan frantically sprinted towards his home, while furiously shouting “Sarah! You little brat, don’t think I didn’t see you take that mana-core!” Since there was so much commotion outside, many of the huts had glimmering blue-eyes peering out of the tiny, glass-less, windows; most of the doors were just animal pelts, so they didn’t even completely cover the entrances.

Michael snickered with a sinister smirk on his face, as he casually walked around the village, looking for a vacant home. There was only a single house that wasn’t being used, and it was the closest to the river; the reason why no one lived there, was because it was haunted.

While he appeared to be simply wandering around, his wisp form had been nonchalantly peeking inside the huts. He discovered that the reason no one mentioned anything about his lack of clothing, was because the majority of goblins didn’t seem to wear them.

In fact, he had already met the whole military force of Riverside; everyone else were either small children, elders, or unranked, level-zero, adults. Without even asking for permission, Michael entered his new home, and looked around for a few moments, before using forty gallons of water to clean both himself and the disgusting floor off: It was made out of dried straw, and a decent amount of mice had been living in there.

He wasted copious amounts of mana, so that he could use ‘Telekinesis’ to spray the water with a decent pressure. The overexertion gave him a horrible migraine, but he didn’t care. After twenty minutes, he was able to clear away all the excrement, fur, dirt, dust, and bones that had been covering the floor.

Michael laid down on the moist straw, and then switched into third-person perspective. A pitch-black wisp was slowly lurking through the huts and creeping on the various goblin families; he muttered “Hmmm, it’s almost like... Holy shit, it’s gotta be the Charisma stat, right? Geeze, if I’m a one, then most of these ugly bastards must be a negative-ten. Eww, no, nope, can’t masturbate to that... No! Oh God no! Now I know why they didn’t include a sense of smell on this fucking astral-projection feature... Like

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seriously, how the hell do these people live in a tiny hut, with a shit-bucket five feet away from their beds and kitchens?!”

It had been two days since he was brought to that world; in all of that time, he hadn't 'relieved' himself, but even with the ability to peep on people as much as he wanted to... Well, in the end, he was forced to just use his imagination, and memories, while desperately trying to forget everything that he had witnessed during his exploration of Riverside Village.

Once he had satisfied himself, he opened his companion-screen, and summoned Inari. For the exhausted fox, it seemed as if no time had passed; she was also still completely filthy, so he had to spend a few minutes spraying her with water, in an attempt to wash away all the blood and dirt.

The naked man grimaced, while muttering “Even though my stamina-bar is practically full, it feels like I haven't slept for two days... I wonder if there's a way to turn off the wisp mode?” After he was satisfied that the vixen was clean enough, Michael laid down onto his side, and used her body as a wet pillow. Surprisingly, Inari didn't seem to mind the slight bit of pressure, and managed to fall asleep before her strange Companion.

While his physical form was unconscious, the black ball of incorporeal darkness, was forced out of Michael's forehead and sighed resignedly. Instead of dreaming, he could only slow-down his perception of time, as a wisp.

However, before he could fast-forward, he heard some annoying shouting coming from the center of the village. Swiftly floating through the wall of his hut, and a couple of other houses along the way, he finally reached Jonathan's home.

Without any hesitation, he quickly entered inside and floated near the top of the relatively high ceiling. It was dark, but there were a few candles dimly lighting the room. The Lorekeeper and his daughter were sitting across from each-other, on animal furs, and in-between them was a tiny crimson-pearl: which was laying inside of a clay bowl.

Sarah, who had changed out of her leather armor and into a ripped and torn grey nightgown, was biting her lower lip as she stared at the rank-F mana-core. Jonathan sighed and asked her “Why are you so obsessed with evolving? Just keep training, and you'll definitely become a Hobgoblin within a few years...”

Hearing that, the green-skinned girl scowled, while Michael muttered “Dafuck? Well, if I wasn't immortal, I would definitely take the long but safe route... Glad I'm not an NPC~.”



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She looked her father in the eyes and told him “You’re a coward. If you weren’t so weak-minded, Mama would still be alive, and we wouldn’t be forced to live in this shitty hut. I’m different from you; if I was in your place, I would have slaughtered every single one of those fucking Humans. Even if it took me months to slowly kill them off, I would have made sure that they all died by my own hands. Hmph, did you think that it was brave to be treated like garbage? Did you think I would thank you for sacrificing our dignity, so that they would spare our worthless lives?! I truly despise you... and now, you reprimand me for killing a Human?”

Jonathan grit his teeth, then growled “You... Sarah, there are some things that should never be said!” as he swiftly back-handed her left cheek with an open palm. A massive ‘-10’ appeared above the girl’s head, as her whole body lifted off the ground and smacked into the mud-brick wall; she was ‘stunned,’ ‘terrified,’ ‘disoriented,’ and she even spat out a few of her yellow molars.

Michael started laughing hysterically, as he yelled “Holy shit! Hahahaha~ wrecked!” Then the armor-wearing, bulky Hobgoblin, stood-up and walked over to the crying girl, grabbed her short, black-hair, with his left hand, and forced her to face him.

She glared at him, with a deep hatred and fear, as her father sighed, throwing her back onto the brown pelt that she had been sitting on before. After he sat down again, Jonathan calmly told her “You foolish child... What good is honor and respect, if everyone who love has to die for you to keep it? Well, it matters not, when you have a family of your own one day, you shall surely understand.”

The little Thief struggled to sit upright, as the old man continued “You’re still young, Sarah. When I was ten years old, I was impatient and reckless as well. Unlike you, I didn’t have any other choice but to win my first mana-core in a duel against a fellow Goblin. Then I continued to risk my life struggling as a rank-G adventurer, until I reached level-ten and was confident in my ability to fight against a rank-F Hobgoblin.”

Then he frowned and asked her “You say you hate Humans, but what do you think would have happened if you had actually defeated him in a duel? Assuming you don’t simply die, what do you think will happen when you swallow that mana-core? Hmph, hypocritical brat... was that your plan all along?”

Sara’s face was incredibly swollen, but she was still able to smirk slightly. After spitting a bunch of blood onto her father’s face, she snickered for a few seconds, before replying “Even if I did become a Hobgoblin, what would that change? We’re barely

even considered demi-humans! If I'm lucky, I'll become a Green-Elf... but even if I end up as an Orc, it'll still be better than this!"

Michael sighed dramatically, as he muttered "What is this, the evolution tutorial event? Wait a second, is ten years old for a Goblin like, a teenager or an adult? Hmmm, I wonder what the age of consent is... if there even is one. Well, whatever, but I kinda want to see what would happen if she really ate that mana-core. Hehehe~ I'm surprised though, they didn't even notice my little slight of hand."

## Chapter 15: You Are What You Eat

Michael snickered as he asked himself "I wonder if this counts as me giving her the mana-core? It would be interesting if she became my Companion, assuming that she survives, heh. Sure, she's cute as a Goblin, but way too boring for my tastes. Hmmm, okay, stop talking and take the little red pill..."

Jonathan shook his head back and forth, then let out a deep sigh; he told his daughter "Fine, I won't try to dissuade you any longer..." as he took off the dark-brown gourd from his belt, and poured the crimson liquid into the clay bowl: It was an expensive healing potion, that he always kept in case of emergencies.

Sarah smirked, as she quickly picked up the bowl and placed it to her lips. Her face immediately began returning to normal, as the swelling dissipated, and her health rapidly regenerated to full.

While she was taking huge gulps of the bitter medicine, Michael muttered "Ah, yea, I figured that something like that would be helpful. It would be better if I could learn some healing spells though: I hate using potions. Hell, most consumable stat boosters or

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recovery items are usually extremely wasteful. Although, I can understand why they would be really useful in a situation where death is a bit more, permanent.”

The moment that the Goblin-girl finished drinking down the entire bowl of bright-red liquid, along with the scarlet mana-core, she immediately noticed a searing pain coursing throughout her body. Blood began pouring from her ears, eyes, nostrils and mouth, as she started coughing violently.

A certain pitch-black wisp was laughing hysterically during the whole transformation. Sara’s skin went from a smooth, dark-green, to a slimy crimson; all the hair on her head swiftly fell out and was replaced by skinny, but thin, pink, spiny worms.

Jonathan shouted “Wh-what is this?! Oh Goddess, please forgive my daughter!” as the girl’s bright-blue eyes turned a milky white. She screamed and wailed constantly, but as soon as her Health started to drop, the healing potion would recover it rapidly.

Sarah was rolling around on the ground as her entire body spasmed uncontrollably. Eventually she started spitting out her teeth, one by one, until there were none left; at the same time, her fingernails and toenails fell off.

Then long, narrow, and incredibly sharp fangs started growing from her bleeding gums. Just when the pain finally stopped and exhausted girl was about to lose consciousness, another strange change occurred.

From the top of her tailbone, a huge blood-worm began growing, tearing open her flesh and squirming around, while spewing a dark-black liquid out of its ‘mouth.’ Sarah screamed “What’s... happening... to me!?” before convulsing violently, and promptly passing out.

Her race changed to “Bloodworm-Goblin, Rank-F” and her maximum health increased to twenty-five. Jonathan knelt down next to his mutated daughter, and hugged her close to his chest while silently weeping.

Michael snickered, and muttered “Pretty bad-ass, still cute too... but she’s probably going to kill me again when she wakes up. I guess it’s not as easy to get humanoid Companions, huh? Well, whatever, it’s not like I forced her to steal the mana-core from me. Speaking of which, that bastard was so pre-occupied, that he probably didn’t even listen to my demands. Ugh, fuck it all, I’m going to sleep... Okay, I’m already unconscious, so I’ll just go loiter somewhere else.”

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After leaving the Lorekeeper's hut, the wisp lazily floated through the dark skies and allowed time to flow by at an incredibly accelerated rate. The crescent moon swiftly disappeared, as a bright yellow sun rose in the east, and the naked man finally opened his eyes.

Inari had wriggled out from under his head, and left the hut, searching for water and food. She wasn't a house-pet after-all, and didn't expect a Human to constantly take care of her needs.

As Michael got up, the first thing he did was crack his stiff neck, popping it several times, then doing the same to his back. Damp straw wasn't as bad as stones, gravel and dirt, but he was used to sleeping on a soft... relatively comfortable, broken, bed; he was just thankful that there weren't any mosquitoes.

It did seem strange that such a warm and humid place, wouldn't have that many blood-sucking pests, but he was thankful for it. Of course, he didn't know that it was because of his Aura stat, which animals and magical-beasts would either be attracted to, or repelled by.

Outside, there was a decent amount of ambient noise. Herds of wild horses neighing, and cattle mooing, in the distance; however, even within the village, children were running around and playing near the beach, while most of the adults were fishing.

Compared to that little stream Michael met Inari at, Riverside was next to a truly large waterway. In fact, it was at least three miles wide, and flowed from the northwest, to the southeast, serving as a natural border between lush green plains, and a vast savanna, with yellow grass.

The unranked Thieves and Warriors, were all either training or hunting for food. Even the elderly Goblins were performing monotonous, but important, tasks.

Michael sighed as he walked half a mile to the south, before urinating in the grass, far away from any people. All the little green men and women who saw him, seemed to either silently curse, receive a 'terrified' debuff, or the even stranger 'charmed' status.

He muttered "From what I've seen and heard, there seems to be some sort of race-war between Humans and Goblins. Well, if it's anything like most games, stories, and Earth's history, both sides are probably total assholes. Oi, Inari, stop!"

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While he was talking to himself, and urinating in the grass, a dog-sized Triple-Tailed Fox suddenly ran in front of him and then continued to jump around in the yellow liquid. He yelled “Eww... ugh, gross, don’t rub it on me!” as he tried to avoid the excited vixen. Then she ran behind his left foot and tripped the naked man, causing him to become covered in the warm fluid.

Michael picked up the filthy kit, then quickly walked a few dozen meters away, before rapidly releasing twenty gallons of cold water over the two of them. Inari whined and cried the whole time, while trying to escape from his vice-like grip.

Once he had finally calmed down a bit, the two of them returned to Riverside. However, compared to the slightly fearful gazes and expressions of the Goblins towards the naked Human, the moment they saw a rank-F magical-beast, people ran inside of their homes while screaming in terror.

Hearing all the commotion, a groggy old man, with blood-shot eyes and only some leather britches, came out of his rather large hut, carrying an iron battleaxe. Jonathan glared at Michael, who had an indifferent expression, but when he looked at Inari, she growled angrily, before howling a few times with mana-infused into her voice; the level-one “Intimidation” had no effect, because her target was so much higher level than her.

The Lorekeeper sighed, and the naked Human scolded “Bad doggy, no wonder you got killed by that damn cougar. If you see someone who’s stronger than you, don’t antagonize them for fuck’s sake.”

Michael turned back to the Hobgoblin after his Companion started whimpering and ran away, and said “Let me guess, rather than returning the rank-F mana-core to me, you actually allowed your daughter to use it. Ah, but you didn’t use an identification ability on it beforehand... I mean seriously, is it just that you didn’t have one? Hell, if you had been paying attention, you probably would have noticed me switching the black vomit-covered one, with a crimson replacement.”

An oppressive aura was emitted from Jonathan’s body, which intensified with every word that he heard. Then he roared “You... you bastard! So it was all your fault! My beautiful Sarah... you turned her into a hideous monster! Hahahaha~ you might be an otherworlder, but you’re still a Human in the end! I’m going to kill you, over and over again, until you’ve suffered a fate far worse than death!”

Just as he was about to attack, Michael snickered, and casually asked him “Ah, yeah, I’m the bad guy here, right? In case you don’t remember, I was the one who stopped

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her from swallowing my mana-core, remember? Now, what would have happened to her, if she had managed to digest that little black bead? Not only did I save her life then, I even warned you that she ‘stole’ the damn thing from me... I mean, she is a ‘Thief’ and all, but still, isn’t it a crime to take things from others without permission? Have I demanded some compensation for that?”

Then he continued to complain “No, you’re threatening to murder me, repeatedly, for your own damn mistakes. Besides, I might be weak right now, and you could certainly kill me fairly easily... but how long do you think that would last? It’s not like I have to come back right away, I could wait for days, years, it would only seem like a moment for me, but you would have to be constantly vigilant against my sudden return. Anyway, stop freaking out, it’s not like Sarah’s dead, right? Also, what kind of father calls their daughter a hideous monster?”

## Chapter 16: Every Quest Is a Death-Flag

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After being berated by the completely naked and unarmed, level-four Human, Jonathan managed to regain his senses and realized how foolish he had been. Considering that he barely had any sleep, it wasn't that strange for him to be a little strung-out, but he nearly made an enemy of an immortal being with strange powers that the old Hobgoblin couldn't even begin to comprehend.

Michael sighed, and told the Lorekeeper "Listen, I really don't feel like dealing with all this drama. Last night, I gave you those those pieces of garba-er, ancient heirlooms. Now, I wasn't expecting much of a reward, but I certainly didn't come here to get murdered."

Jonathan was still angry, though he managed to suppress his rage, while still tightly gripping his battle-axe, and grumbling "I... apologize for my rudeness... erm, you never did tell me your name, otherworlder. I am-"

However, he was immediately cut-off by the naked man, who casually walked past him while saying "I'm Mike, you're Jon, now let's go inside... It's too damn hot out here. Well, it's not like you've got air-conditioning, but at least the sun won't be so intense." The Hobgoblin was astounded by how rude that strange human was acting, though he had seen much worse.

When the two of them entered inside, Michael glanced at the pained face of the unconscious Bloodworm-Goblin, and muttered "Her personality might be terribad, but she still looks beautiful to me..." She was sleeping near the northern wall of the hut, laying on a fluffy brown bear-pelt, completely naked.

The Lorekeeper whispered "Even if I don't kill you, it doesn't mean that I'll stop her from cutting your head off again." as the two of them sat down across from each-other. Michael obviously picked the one that wasn't covered in copious amounts of blood and other bodily fluids, but he still felt like he was sitting on the floor of a public bathroom.

Jonathan finally asked "So, what the hell do you want? Do you expect me to thank you, because I won't." He quietly set the battle-axe down to his left, while gritting his teeth.

The Human nudist replied "Nah, I don't give a shit about your gratitude, and I sure as hell don't expect money from a place that's literally made out of grass and mud. Teach me how to craft things."

However, the Lorekeeper just frowned and said "Do I look like a fucking blacksmith or leatherworker? Old Man Kyle, and Granny Auria are the only people in the village who

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actually have crafting professions. Didn't ya notice how most folks here don't even wear clothes? Well, it's too damn hot to wear much of anything, unless it's armor for hunting. Look around, this is everything I have... Yeah, well, we didn't always used to live out here, in Riverside."

Michael sighed dramatically, and muttered "This sounds like the start of a really annoying Quest..." as he casually glanced at the mostly empty room. There were a few metal pots and pans, a basket that was full of fruit, some piles of leather armor and a handful of daggers, plus a 'toilet' which was essentially just a hole in the ground: That was why the place smelled so terrible.

Jonathan had a serious expression as he quietly said "I was an adventurer, up until a few years ago. Kara, Sarah's mother, was one of my Companions... We were both fairly wealthy and powerful rank-F Hobgoblins, living in 'Carrabelle City.' On the surface, it's an independent state, where people from all races are welcome... but the truth is, the majority of the population are Humans. Elves are idolized, the Warbeasts are respected, Orcs are feared, Dwarves are tolerated, and Goblins are treated like shit!"

After the little naked girl groaned from the noise, he sighed, before whispering "It's all about power; no two people are born equal. The Goblin Empire is actually really large, and controls well... everything on the other side of the Archean River. I'd never want to go there though, way too overpopulated; plagues run rampant, bandits are everywhere, and having a mana-core makes hordes of unranked assholes want to murder you. The problem is that, from birth, certain races are just drastically better than others.

"Most Elven 'Clans' are wealthier than entire nations, and they naturally develop their mana-cores faster than any other race. They do age much slower, and have trouble reproducing, but in the end, it doesn't really make much of a difference, since the majority of their Clans can live for up to a thousand years... unranked. There are Elves who get treated like Gods, because they've been around for so long that they've managed to reach S-rank, and levels so high, I can't even guess em."

At that point, Michael looked up at the ceiling with his mouth slightly open, while complaining "I don't care... get to the fucking point." However, Jonathan pretended not to hear anything, or notice how obnoxious the naked man was acting.

After clearing his throat, he continued "What I'm trying to say, is that compared to all the other races that I know of, Goblins are definitely one of the weakest. Not just because of our relatively small stature; we grow quickly, but we only live for at most, thirty years.



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I'm in my late twenties, but I still have at least another couple decades left, because I'm a Hobgoblin, and have two rank-F mana-cores within my body."

Once he heard that, Michael smirked and started staring at the old man again. Then he asked "Is that what makes you an Elite? Also, how exactly did you become one?"

Hearing that question, Jonathan grimaced, before looking downward and clenching his fists tightly. He quietly replied "For magical-beasts, it can happen randomly, after they consume enough mana-cores of the same rank that they're at. Humanoids have two ways; the first, only requires time, Luck, and Willpower. It will happen eventually, as long as a person stays at the same rank for long enough and keeps gaining levels."

The old hobgoblin suddenly glared at Michael, and told him "The second way, is when a Companion transfers their mana-core to you... before their death. There is an especially cruel condition though; both sides have to be deeply in love with each-other. Otherwise, you would see a lot more 'Elites' out there... though they aren't too rare. It isn't that uncommon for adventurers to form pairs at the same rank, and wind up either married or at least romantically involved. Anyway, back to my original purpose for telling you all of this; I want you to go to Carrabelle City... and take Sarah with you."

As Jonathan stared at him, waiting for some sort of reaction, the immortal nudist squinted and finally said "Go on..." Another few seconds of silence passed, as the two of them stared at each-other.

Then the Lorekeeper sighed, and whispered "Shouldn't you be asking me why? Actually, are you really willing to travel with someone who hates you, and already killed you once? I've been waiting until at least a few of her friends became rank-G Warriors and Thieves, but I honestly don't see much hope for any of them. You on the other hand, not only do you have a powerful magical-beast, but even without weapons or armor, you're still pretty impressive. Well, the most important thing, is that you're Human. As long as the two of you are together, regardless of her race, Sarah will be able to become an adventurer fairly easily, and safely."

Michael groaned, before telling him "I really hate cities, especially when the technology is basically nonexistent... but since there's magic, it shouldn't be too bad. Well, rather than learn crafting, it would be way easier to just pay someone else to do it for me. Yea, I'll accept the escort mission, can't promise that your brat will agree though. Oh wait, she doesn't have to."

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He quickly stood up, and walked over to the unconscious, naked, Blood-Goblin. When he placed his right hand, on her left shoulder, Jonathan yelled “What the hell do ya think you're doing!?” but was completely shocked, when he saw his daughter disappear into thin air.

There was no disturbance, mana, or aura; she simply vanished into nothingness. As Michael stood-up and turned back around, a message popped up, which read “Sarah has entered extra-dimensional prison-slot one.”

Then he casually explained “Don’t worry, she’s fine; I’ll let her out again when I make it to the city. Even if it takes a hundred years, for her, it’s as if time was completely stopped. Anyway, as long as she’s stored away, it’s impossible for her to die... or kill me.”

Michael suddenly received another notification: “New Quest: Escort Jonathan’s daughter, Sarah, to Carrabelle City safely. Once there, assist her in joining the Adventurer’s Guild. Reward: One silver coin and twenty-five experience points.”

## Chapter 17: The MC Hates Walking

Michael walked over to the pile of Sarah's equipment, and used 'Scan' on the various items, which revealed "Crude Leather Armor: Grants the wearer one Defense Rating. Made to fit a female Goblin. Poor Quality, no level requirement." It was so low-end, that the entire suit could be placed in bag-slot eleven: If it had been Uncommon, then each piece would have required a separate spot.

Then he moved onto the five knives on the ground, each of which were about the same length and shape. Channeling Mana into his eyes, the information window popped-up: "Rusty Iron Dagger(Poisoned): Grants the user five Attack Rating. Dull, chipped, warped, rusted, and created with very little skill, but coated in a deadly neurotoxin. Poor Quality, low durability, no level requirement."

Jonathan sighed, and said "If you walk into Carrabelle City completely naked, the guards will probably arrest you for public indecency... even if you are Human. Unfortunately, I don't really have anything that would fit you."

As he shoved the five tiny weapons into bag-slot twelve, Michael snickered and told the Hobgoblin "Well, I'll figure something out... No offense, but I really don't want to spend another night in this shitty village. Hmmm, I should probably collect a few thousand gallons of water before I leave though."

Leaving the hut, the naked man casually walked towards the white, sandy beach, ignoring the various spearfishing Goblins, and wading into the water until it was up to his chest. Unlike the little stream, the river was moving a lot slower, so he wasn't too worried about getting carried away; in fact, there were even small waves that crashed against the shore.

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Suddenly, a huge whirlpool developed with his right hand as the center, and he lazily watched as the numbers rapidly increased in his seventh bag-slot. The speed was dozens of times faster than he could achieve in that tiny inlet he was using the first time.

When it passed ten-thousand gallons, he muttered “Well, if I ever need to build a pool... Hmmm, but there might be some weird situation. Maybe I’ll encounter some kinda fire-demon and need to use copious amounts of water to weaken it. A hundred-thousand should be enough...”

However, when he reached fifty-thousand, he received a notice: “Bag-slot seven has reached maximum capacity.” Which made him realize that if he really wanted to fill all sixteen, it was possible for him to carry eight-hundred thousand gallons of water.

Michael was tempted to keep going, but then he noticed Inari swimming over to him while barking. He smiled at her and asked “What’s wrong girl?” as he felt a sharp pain in his left thigh, and then remembered something fairly important: There were crocodiles in the river.

A ‘-9’ appeared, along with a ‘bleeding’ debuff, but surprisingly, the ten-foot long brown-scaled reptile wasn’t able to tear his leg off. His four points of Endurance gave his body two points of Defense Rating, which was actually pretty significant against the attacks of unranked animals.

Before he even had a chance to do anything, Inari dove underwater and used her relatively small fangs and claws to gouge out the crocodile’s eyes, before biting into its thick skull and delivering a series of large critical strikes for ‘-8,’ ‘-11,’ ‘-7,’ and finally over-killing it with a ‘-13’ deadly strike.

Unfortunately, even though the beast was level-four, and had a max health of fifty-five, Michael still didn’t get any experience when it died. Only rankless beasts could gain experience and levels from killing and eating each-other.

Michael’s touched the corpse with his left hand and sent it into bag-slot thirteen, while muttering “Even if it wasn’t a magical-beast, it was still a level-four crocodile... I should be able to sell it for a few coppers, probably. Anyway, according to the map, Carrabelle City is... fuck my life, fifty-miles to the northwest. Ugh, if I actually walk there barefoot, nope, not gonna do it. Hmmm, Inari’s way too small and weak to carry me, so I should probably find a horse... or something like that.”

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With four points in Agility, his weight was only two-hundred and ten pounds, so most large magical-beasts would be able to easily carry him. However, he immediately remembered something rather important, “Oh yea, I definitely don’t know how to ride a horse... and even if I did, I’d probably just get motion-sickness. Hell, I can’t even drive five miles in a car... sigh, well, at least I can use my wisp form and make everything speed-up a bit.”

Of course, he couldn’t actually alter time, but merely his perception of it. Thus, he embarked on the longest walk in his entire life: up until that point at least.

Carrabelle City was located along the Archeus River, so he decided to stay near the beach... until the third crocodile attack, where he nearly lost his right leg. After his injuries recovered, he continued along a slightly safer path, through the grassy plains.

On the first day, he ended up sharing a level-one core-less magical rabbit with Inari. He discovered that with his twenty stamina, he became exhausted after five hours of nonstop walking, but the vixen still had a bit of energy left: Even though her maximum stamina was only ten.

That was the difference between bipedal and quadrupedal movement, combined with ratios of Agility to Strength, Stamina, Endurance and physical size. It required a lot less power for the little fox to run, jump, hunt, and play all day long, than for the immortal Human to simply hike at a slow, comfortable pace.

They only managed to travel fifteen miles on that first day, and the two of them casually slept in a grass-less, stony field that night. Upon encountering the huge area, covered in monolithic pillars and broken statues, Michael mentioned “Hmmm, this doesn’t look suspicious at all... ‘Cain’s Refuge’ kinda sounds like a vampire thing, so maybe there’s some secret dungeon entrance around here? Well, whatever, I’m definitely way too low leveled to get involved in that kinda shit.” before picking out a smooth and flat stone slab to lay on.

Aside from the overall zones like ‘Carrabelle Plains’ or ‘Ariel’s Meadow,’ locations such as cities, towns, villages, and other significant places were also marked on his map: when he discovered them, or a quest told him to travel there. In fact, he did think it was strange how Jonathan didn’t even mention the direction that he needed to travel in, he wondered if even NPCs had access to that feature.

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As he nonchalantly slept on that mysterious stone, he noticed a few Goblin-shaped spirits floating around his body occasionally. They didn't particularly do anything, but a 'haunted' debuff appeared above his unconscious head.

He fast-forwarded and snickered, as he watched the scabs, bruises, gashes and other injuries on his legs rapidly regenerate. His Mana was nearly empty the whole time, but since he was sleeping anyway, it didn't really make a difference.

However, aside from the outward, obvious injuries that were completely recovered in two hours, even the internal ones were healed. In the morning, when he woke up with full Mana, Stamina, and Health, Michael stretched while smiling, and muttered "So overpowered... ugh, how did I live my whole life until now without this 'Superior Regeneration' nonsense? Hell, it's still only at level one... Sigh, I can't believe I can actually breathe out of my nose as well. Hmm, plus I don't have to worry about getting sick, from any diseases under level two..."

After taking a cold shower, by spraying a few gallons of water over his skin and hair, he complained "If I was brought into this world a few seconds earlier, I could have had a whole bottle of shampoo and conditioner, a little later, and I would at least have some body-wash. Please have soap in Carrabelle City... or at least some lye; not that I have any idea what proportions to use, but it would be worth the effort, as long as I don't have to be filthy forever."

Inari was still sleeping, so he sat back down on the stone slab, next to her, and began experimenting with his bag. When he had taken out the blood-worm's mana-core, it was actually the first time he had every tried removing just a part of the animals that were in his inventory.

Michael thought it was possible, because when he originally killed it, the little red bead had to be picked up separately from the rest of the carcass, yet when he stored them, it registered as a single item. The same thing happened when he stored the vomit-covered black-pearl, with his corpse: they merged in his bag-slot.

However, since he had nothing better to do, he decided to play around with the possibilities. With a decent amount of concentration, he imagined removing a level-one rabbit out of his inventory; he still had twenty-three of the core-less carcasses left, so they seemed like the least valuable to him.

As Michael closed his eyes, he envisioned only the 'meat,' and the moment that the blob of bloody muscle-tissue he grumbled "Uch, eww, I don't even... oh God, why is it

moving?” Since he stored most of the creatures immediately after their Health was reduced to zero, their bodies were still slightly functional.

Then he finally realized the truly terrifying aspect of that particular ability, and asked himself “Holy shit! Wait, wait, doesn’t that mean I can shove an unranked, living animal or person inside of my inventory... Then take them out again, but missing all their skin or bones?”

## Chapter 18: Crafting Is Important

Michael sighed, and then said “Well, if I meet someone who pisses me off enough, I’ll get to test out that theory... Otherwise, I’d rather not torture people or animals just to find out if it’s possible. Although, if I can take things apart...” Suddenly, the hunk of rabbit meat in his hand disappeared, and then he brought out a completely intact, white-furred bunny: aside from the missing head.

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He started laughing hysterically, and muttered “This would have be really overpowered... if it wasn’t for the fact that magic exists here. Hell, a low level healing spell could probably help someone regenerate their arm or leg as well. Anyone weak enough to be shoved into a bag-slot, could most likely be fixed with very little Mana.”

After that, he attempted to store only the skin or bones, but it didn’t seem to be possible. He also tried to remove the heat, when taking water out of his inventory, which didn’t work. The naked man asked himself “Wait a second, this, isn’t the real purpose of this feature meant to be used in crafting? I mean, normal adventurers probably only harvest the mana-core, plus whatever the easiest to carry, and most valuable parts of that particular magical-beast are. Unless they brought along a gigantic cooler with them, they definitely wouldn’t be able to haul a huge carcass back to town before it starts to rot. So... let’s see~, I really wish this shit had voice commands. Open the motherfucking crafting menu!”

Even though him yelling didn’t actually influence anything, his thoughts were able to bring up a message: “You have not learned any crafting professions. In order to activate the ‘Automated Item Creation System,’ please choose a basic crafting profession to unlock: Blacksmithing, Tailoring, Leatherworking, Alchemy, Enchanting. Warning: Only one profession can be active at a time. Progress will not be lost upon deactivating a profession, and it can be reactivated for a price of one silver coin per level. AICS requires mana-cores to operate.”

Michael smirked, before muttering “Hmmm~, potions and elixirs would probably be the most profitable, but that means there would be more competition; also, I don’t really ‘need’ them for myself, so that’s out. Enchanting, ugh, I’ll probably end up with that eventually, because it’s most likely the most difficult and rare; unfortunately, I don’t really have anything to use it on at the moment. I need clothing, but armor would work as well, plus, the only materials I’ve found so far are... hides, lots and lots of animal pelts.”

While wincing slightly, he mentally poked the box that read “Leatherworking,” and was immediately enveloped in a bright-white light. Then there was a ding noise, and his status-screen was updated.

[Player Information

Name: Michael

Titles: The Nudist, The Noob, The Immortal, The Lurker



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Level: 4  
Experience: 5/40  
Age: Adult  
Race: Human  
Rank: F  
Class: None  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Leatherworking Level 1]

When he opened his bag, he noticed the letters 'LW' next to each of the carcasses, including his own corpses, and the six leather strips in slot-six. Michael smirked, as he selected the level-one, core-less white-rabbits, and was given an option: "Would you like to activate Automated Harvesting? Warning: Efficiency is based upon the Luck stat, and profession level in comparison to the selected raw materials or ingredients."

The moment he accepted, ten of the bunnies vanished from his inventory, and in his left hand appeared a stack of ten tanned, white, rabbit pelts. However, the strangest part, was that they were all completely intact; when none of the carcasses had heads before the process.

Without even trying to understand how or why that happened, he opened up the 'Leatherworking' screen, and glanced at the only pattern set that he had access to. "Basic Fur Armor: Costs ten small, five medium, or one large, Low to Uncommon Quality pelt, and one rank-G mana-core."

Michael directly removed the last level-one white-rabbit's mana-core, directly from his inventory, using his right hand. Then he shoved everything into the crafting box, and was given another option "Please choose the size: small, medium, large, or custom."

For any normal person living in that world for their entire life, such a convenient and amazing ability would seem incredibly overpowered. However, he just groaned and muttered "Well, I guess it was too much to expect the armor magically adjust to the wearers size, huh?" as he picked his own body-measurements, and finally activated the 'AICS.'

With a bright flash of light, he received a message: "Pristine Basic White-Rabbit Fur Armor: Grants the wearer two Defense Rating, and one Agility. Made to fit a short and muscular, male Human. Uncommon Quality, must be at least level-one to equip." Followed by another notification: "Leatherworking has reached level two."

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It was supposed to be a full set, but there were only three pieces of clothing which appeared in his hands. Two snow-white fur boots, and a seamless kilt, which had ten rabbit-heads, placed at even intervals along the surprisingly elastic waistband. Michael quickly wore his newly-acquired gear, and smirked, as he looked at the change in his information-screen.

[Stats

Health: 40/40

Mana: 15/15

Stamina: 20/20

Mana Regen per minute: 20

Health Regen per hour: 40

Strength: 4

Vitality: 4

Endurance: 4

Dexterity: 3

Agility: 4(+1)

Intelligence: 3

Wisdom: 2

Perception: 1

Charisma: 1

Willpower: 14

Luck: 14

Aura: 1.8

Attack Power: 20

Defense Rating: 2(+2)]

Unlike weapons, which required the user to actually strike their opponents with them, armor was different. Whether it was a frail-looking cloth shirt, a pair of slippers, or an extremely revealing metal bikini, all that mattered were the stats.

When Michael put on the three pieces of equipment, his body became lighter and more agile, while his skin, muscles, and bones had become twice as durable. Unless his kilt and boots were destroyed, even when they were in tatters, he would still receive the same benefits.

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Of course, certain areas would always be more vulnerable than others. A person wearing a full suit of plate-mail, could protect themselves better than someone who only had some bracers with the same amount of Defense Rating.

There were pros and cons to both light and heavy armor, but it was usually related to Class and Specialization. Since Michael hadn't acquired either of those yet, he also didn't have to be too picky about what equipment he used.

He snickered, and said "It's kinda half-assed, but at least it didn't include a fur coat and hat, cause there ain't no way in hell I'm wearing winter clothes in this kinda weather." Then the mostly white-furred, Triple-Tailed Fox, finally woke-up.

As she yawned and stretched her body, Michael pulled two large chunks of level-four crocodile meat, out of his inventory. Seeing and smelling that, the vixen yowled excitedly, jumping up and down on the ancient stone slab, causing small cracks to appear; he told her "Calm down damn it, here, eat." as he dropped the hunk of bloody thigh-muscle, a few inches in-front of her.

Then he sighed, before starting to devour his 'breakfast' at a rapid pace. The taste was actually pretty good, and it was so fresh, that there was no bad smells... but if he didn't have a decent amount of experience with eating raw fish, and preparing food, he probably wouldn't have been able to consume it so easily.

After a few minutes, they had each finished off three pounds of chewy meat, and continued on their journey to the northwest. They traveled five uneventful miles, through the seemingly endless grasslands, but then the scenery started to change.

Until that point, he did notice the occasional patches of random flowers, but even at a glance, he immediately recognized the huge fields of maize. Michael muttered "Hmmm, smells like shit... I guess we've finally reached the outskirts of Carrabelle City, or at least the farms that supply them with food."

There were hundreds of Goblins, Humans and even some Orcs spread around the cornfields, using scythes and wheelbarrows to harvest the crops. However, he could tell at a glance, that they were all level-zero, classless, unranked farmers; of course, just because their combat abilities were nonexistent, didn't meant that their professions weren't developed.

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As he trudged through the already cleared away stalks, Michael and Inari were completely ignored. One was only about the size of a normal dog, and there were quite a few of them wandering around, plus, adventurers passed through rather frequently.

No one could tell that either of them were rank-F, so they just casually strolled by, without attracting any attention. It took them an hour to pass through the cornfields, and then there was wheat, barley, potatoes, and finally, they ended up at the actual farming village by nightfall.

Even with her slightly increased Agility, the vixen was still exhausted, so he decided to find an inn. Compared to Riverside, 'Jacobstown' was gigantic... but only had a population of eight-hundred or so.

There was a general store, a blacksmith, granary, a few hundred houses, stables for horses and cattle, pigsties, chicken-coops, and even a large town-hall at the center of the village. Everything was pretty spread-out though, so it took him a while to find the inconspicuous, two-story building he was searching for; it was called "The Roasted Maize."

## Chapter 19: An Immortal Walks Into a Bar

Michael muttered “It’s bad enough that I have to smell the fucking pigs, cows, chickens and horses... now I have to stay at ‘The Popcorn Motel.’ Ugh, well, whatever, it’s still better than sleeping on the dirt I guess. Ah, Inari, come here for a second.” as he reached down and gently caressed the vixen’s head, before sending her into Companion-slot one.

After taking a deep breath, he used telekinesis to open the saloon-style doors, and walked into the noisy bar. It was only eight, so the night was still relatively young for the various adventurers and hunters: who were drinking beer, liquor, or wine.

There were at least twenty small tables spread throughout the room, and some stools near the actual bar. Seeing the rabbit-kilt wearing, topless man, walk into the building, most of the Dwarves, Goblins, Orcs and Humans didn’t even look at him; the Warbeasts however, were different.

Near the northernmost corner of the room was a medium-sized, rounded table, with three people sitting around it. Each of them were of the Cat-Tribe; they had black hair and fur, tan skin, feline pupils, and long, slightly-fluffy tails.

A young woman with freckles and yellow irises, wearing a white-robe, quietly whispered “How does someone earn a title like that?” Anyone with a decent ‘Identification’ skill would easily be able to see that above his head floated “Michael The Immortal, Level-4 Human, Rank-F.”

The lightly-bearded middle-aged man to her left, grumbled “He’s so weak, but already Rank-F...” He was a fairly large-framed, and incredibly muscular level-seven, rank-G Knight, with a full suit of thick steel plate-mail, and a huge flamberge sheathed across his back.

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Lastly, was an alluring female, with large breasts, bright-blue eyes, and an incredibly revealing, nearly transparent, azure silk dress. A 'charming' smile appeared on her small lips, as she stood up and shouted "Michael, come sit with us!"

Hearing his name suddenly called, the half-naked human glanced over to the corner of the room, and saw two cat-girls and a heavily armored cat-man. He muttered "Enchantress sounds like a slutty Sorceress... Hmmm, their names are all red. They're only a few levels higher than me, and a rank lower, but they actually have decent gear. Sigh, oh well, let's see what kinda cliché bullshit they're gonna try to pull." as he nonchalantly walked towards them.

The Knight glared at him, with dark-red eyes, while shouting "Hurry the fuck up!" before smacking his fists against the table: causing the noisy bar to become silent. Intimidation and other similar spells, which affected a person's mental state, had absolutely no effect on targets with a higher Willpower than the caster.

Michael glanced at the white-robed Priestess, named 'Elina' and asked "What the hell do you assholes want?" as he casually sat down in the seat that the ignored Enchantress had been using.

She glared at him, before sitting on the chair to his right, and whispering into his ear "We know you have a rank-F mana-core in your head... What do you think would happen, if those Orcs and Goblins over there found out?"

He snickered, then turned to the woman and said "They'd probably try to kill me in my sleep, or wait until I left the village tomorrow and attack in a large group. I'd die... at least a few times."

Hearing that, the busty cat-girl chuckled, and told him "Don't worry, we'll keep your secret... for a price." The freckled Priestess sighed, and reached her hand to the middle of the table, grabbing a handful of slightly burnt popcorn, from the rather large bowl; then she shoved it into her mouth, and drank a few sips from her glass of red-wine.

Michael smirked at the level-six, rank-G Enchantress, named Lilly, and asked "You two girls seem surprisingly clean... Hell, you even smell like oranges; fuck the blackmail nonsense, I'm more interested in buying some soap. Ah, I don't have any money, but I can pay in animal carcasses... or human corpses; which would you prefer?"

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The Knight, Richard, yelled “You arrogant little bastard! Do we look like damned soap merchants?!” as he reached across the table and grabbed the man’s throat, with his gauntlet-covered right hand. However, his entire body immediately began convulsing, as he made “Ugugu Gugug, ah~!” noises, and lost consciousness.

A huge ‘-25’ appeared above his head, and his Health dropped down to 20/45, but he received a ‘paralyzed’ debuff. His heavy torso landed on the popcorn-bowl, crushing it, and nearly breaking the table in half.

While there was a general rule against fighting within villages, towns, or cities, unless someone was killed or seriously wounded, no one usually cared. Essentially, the other patrons, even the bartender or waiters, simply acted like they didn’t see anything, and tried not to get involved with the noisy Cat-Tribe adventurers.

Elina quickly raised her left hand into the air, and chanted “Goddess of Light, please grant me your power: Heal!” and a while light emerged from her palm. It seemed to pass through the ceiling, then come back down, landing on her injured comrade.

The effects were instantaneous, as all the burns on Richard’s body were recovered, and his Health was back to full. However, his debuff wasn’t removed, and he didn’t awaken.

Lily glared at the human, and her cat-like, bright-blue eyes glowed, as she cast an illusion spell: “Charm.” Unfortunately for her, Michael’s Willpower stat was much higher than her Charisma, so it didn’t work.

He sighed, and asked her “Calm the fuck down. Seriously, the hell’s wrong with you people? Are you guys bandits? Extortion, blackmail, now you want to murder me? What, do you think I wouldn’t fight back just because you’re adorable nekomimi? Do you have any idea how many cute little bunnies I had to slaughter so far?! Anyway, do you have soap or not?”

As the Enchantress was about to create a fire-ball, Elina angrily told her “Stop it, Lily.” Before coldly staring into the man’s dark-brown eyes, and saying “We do have some extra bars. How much are you willing to pay for them?”

The busty woman grimaced, and scooted her wooden chair a few feet away from him. Michael smirked, as he reached out and pushed against the top of Richard’s steel, full-helm, and sliding him off the cracked table.

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Then he asked “How much are these worth?” as a freshly decapitated, white-rabbit corpse, fell onto the middle of the table. It seemed to have been conjured out of thin-air, but there was no mana involved, so the two girls were startled.

Lily used her ‘Scan Level-4’ and muttered “How the hell... Hmmm, it’s only a level-one, core-less, rank-G though.” Weak magical-beast carcasses were fairly common on the market, but if sold to a Butcher or Leatherworker in Carrabelle City, or turned into the Adventurer’s Guild, it was possible to receive at least twenty copper coins.

Elina reached under her chair, and pulled out a large backpack, made from white-fur, and placed it onto the table. Michael was a little surprised when he saw that there were actually metal zippers, but not very impressed with something so ‘low-tech.’

After opening a compartment, and removing three small, orange, fist-sized bars of soap. A citrusy aroma wafted off of them, and carried over to the relatively filthy Human; he couldn’t help but release a sigh of relief.

She told him “I’ll trade you three for three.” and he immediately removed two more decapitated rabbits from his inventory, dropping them next to the first one, and pushing it all towards the Priestess. Then he stood up, reached over the table, and touched the three bars of soap; making them disappear into thin air, before sitting back down and smirking.

A few seconds of awkward silence passed, before Elina asked “How did you earn that title?” Not only was he far too young and low-leveled, but to be deemed ‘The Immortal,’ she knew that he would have had to survive some sort of terrible disaster.

Michael started laughing hysterically, and then revealed “It was actually pretty easy... I only had to die seven times.” Obviously, the two cat-girls didn’t believe him, so he removed a severed Human head from his inventory and placed it on the table.

Lily screamed as she jumped backwards and fell off her chair, but Elina just calmly activated her ‘Scan Level-5’ and read the description: “Michael The Immortal’s Head: Removed from the level-four corpse of a rank-F Human male; mana-core has been torn out from the back of the skull, then returned. Time of Death: Five minutes ago.”



## Chapter 20: Curiosity Killed the Cat-Girl

As quickly as it had appeared, Michael's severed head vanished again into his first bag-slot before anyone else in the bar was able to see anything. Lily screamed "What the hell was that!?"

However, Elina just calmly looked into his eyes and said "I won't ask how you managed to die seven times, or about why you carry your corpses around with you. What I want to know more than anything, is the method that you're using to store these items. Is it a spell, or some kind of innate divine ability? I don't see any rings or necklaces, so it can't be a magical item's effect."

It wasn't as if extra-dimensional storage was impossible, so there were obviously convenient devices and techniques which could produce a similar effect. Unfortunately,

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the amount of mana required was unreasonably large, and anyone who was that powerful, could find a much more efficient way to achieve a similar result.

Michael snickered for a few seconds, then casually answered “Ah, yeah, it’s something like that, kinda? I guess you could just think of me as a unique existence in this world. It’s not like I can’t die; for fuck’s sake, I’ve already died eleven times in the past few days... Well, at least it hasn’t been boring, heh.”

The Enchantress stood up off the ground and managed to calm down a bit, before sitting back down in her chair. Elina had a quizzical expression on her freckled face, as she smiled and asked “Then... doesn’t that mean you’re a newborn God?”

Hearing that ridiculous question, the Human told her “Nah, I’ve been alive for twenty three years already... but I’ve only been in this particular world for a few days. Hmm~, maybe I shouldn’t be telling this kinda shit to every random person I meet? Well, I’ve never been very good at keeping secrets... or making money. Speaking of which, I don’t suppose that this place will let me pay in crocodiles?”

Lily sighed, but Elina started laughing out loud, as her bright red name suddenly turned yellow, indicating that she was no longer hostile towards him. She said “No, I’m afraid they charge a steep price of ten coppers per night at this inn. Unfortunately, that’s only if you’re Human... for our kind, they charge five silvers.”

After that, the Enchantress chimed in: “Yea, we weren’t really trying to rob you, ya know? I was just gonna... ‘Charm’ you a bit, and have you rent a room for us. Otherwise, we’ll have to camp outside the village... which would be more dangerous than staying in the wilderness. I mean, look around; half the people in here are actually just waiting for their ‘prey’ to leave.”

Michael frowned, and grumbled “Guess that even in this world, Humans are still racist bigots. Well, it’s not like the other races are any better, right? Heh-heh, anyway, you could have just asked me... Although, if I had turned out to be like those other assholes, I probably wouldn’t have agreed without a ludicrous bribe, or perhaps I would have even tried to get some sexual benefits out of the deal.”

Lily had a shocked expression, as her name turned yellow, and then she turned to the unconscious member of their party, who was still laying on the floor. She asked Michael “Hmmm, if you’re willing to rent the room for us, we’ll pay for it, and obviously let you stay there as well. Can you help us carry this idiot upstairs though? He’s pretty damn heavy...”

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However, before she even finished speaking, he got up, walked over to Richard, knelt down, and the moment his hand made contact with the man's armor, the whole person vanished into thin air: causing both of the girls to be slightly surprised. Then he turned to them and said "Okay, I'll bring him back out once we get there. Let's go, I'm exhausted and I really wanna take a bath."

The two women glanced at each-other, before following after the strange Human. Unbeknownst to them, a message-screen appeared before Michael: "New Quest: Three Cat-Tribe adventurers have requested your assistance in renting a room at 'The Roasted Maize' for the night. Be wary though; they aren't as simple as they appear, and just by associating with them, you have already placed a target upon yourself. Upon accepting this quest, the extra-dimensional prison will be unavailable for eight hours: You will have thirty minutes before all prisoners are forcefully ejected. Reward: Two silver coins, and fifty experience."

He scowled, while muttering "Damn it, I'm way too tired for this shit... Sigh, but I can't turn it down either. Besides, if I manage to complete it, I'll immediately level-up. Ugh, the only problem is 'that' one... She's definitely gonna fuck things up. Oh well, I'll deal with it somehow." as he nonchalantly received ten copper coins from Elina, and placed it on the bartop, near the stairs to the second floor.

An elderly Human woman, who had the title of 'Innkeeper' received the payment while sneering at the two cat-girls. She coldly told him "Room-Seven; 'you' can go up... but those little kittens will have to pay ten silvers each."

Michael glared at her, before channeling mana into his voice and whispering "You might not care about your own decrepit, worthless life, but if you try to extort me again, I'll shove a rank-G mana-core down your throat... Here I'll let you pick, do you wanna turn into a worm or a cockroach? Hehehe~, I think you're more a rat." She was only a rankless, level-zero, so 'Intimidation' was extremely effective against her.

When the cat-girls heard his threat, even if they didn't receive a debuff, they still felt terrified. Even if it was a crime worse than murder, forcing someone to mutate that way wasn't that uncommon, and it wasn't very difficult if there was a large power difference between the two people.

Just saying something like that to a Human in Carrabelle City was punishable by death. That was how xenophobic the various races were, and the reason why it was so rare for anyone to take the risk of evolving outside of their own Clan.

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As the three of them walked up the stairs, a group of five rank-F, level-six patrons near the center of the room began whispering to each-other. All of them were wearing inconspicuous brown robes, and were all men of different races: an Orc, a Dwarf, a Hobgoblin, an Ogre, and a Human.

At first glance, they were merely an odd group of Monks or perhaps Earth-Mages, but to anyone with an 'Identification' ability that was under level-ten, they wouldn't have been able to see their titles, races, and especially their classes. That was because they were each wearing a magical necklace, which had the appearance as if it was cheaply made out of chicken or rabbit bones.

The huge, extremely muscular, eight-foot tall Ogre-man, with dark-brown skin, and dozens of horns instead of hair muttered "I can feel the Goddess of Light's power waning... It's time to begin."

Immediately, all five of them pulled out a small glass vial of glowing crimson liquid, and began using it to inscribe a pentagram onto the wooden table. Then they continued to quietly draw various other symbols, while chanting in their minds "Goddess of Darkness, hear our prayers, grant unto us your blessing and deliver onto them your divine retribution!"

Their bodies began rapidly aging, as all the candles and lanterns in the bar grew dim. Pitch-black fumes were slowly escaping from their mouths, and the other patrons began losing consciousness without even having the chance to realize what was happening.

The old innkeeper, and the other unranked staff members, didn't just pass-out... All of the flesh and clothing on their bodies began to erode, and when they were nothing but pure-white bones, their races changed from 'Human' to 'Rank-G Skeleton.'

## Chapter 21: A Hardcore Event

As Michael opened the door he muttered “No locks... seriously? Ugh, this is definitely gonna be a pain in the ass.” The inside of the room was completely dark, until Elina released a bright-white light from her palm, which created a very wide area of illumination.

Then Lily pointed towards the candles, one at a time, silently lighting them from a distance. He couldn’t help but sigh, while asking “Are those Class-specific spells, or is it possible for anyone to learn them?”

The Priestess snickered, and replied “You really must be from another world if you don’t even know that much... Hehe~, magic is all about Affinities. I was born with a connection to the Goddess of Light, so as my level increases, I’ll occasionally receive divine inspiration. Hmmm~, it’s kind of like an idea suddenly pops into your head, and you hear a woman’s voice, who whispers ‘You have learned a new skill.’ Then she gives you a very vague explanation of what it is, and how it works. Although, it happens a lot more often after you gain a Class.”

After that, the Enchantress closed the door and placed a wooden chair under the doorknob, as a makeshift locking mechanism. Michael started awkwardly talking to himself: “Ah, that makes sense I guess... I wonder what my Affinity is? Well, as far as Classes go, I should probably pick something Tanky with healing abilities. Paladins are always overpowered, but how does someone like me even get a Class?”

In the room were two fairly large beds, with black sheets and no comforters; there were two fluffy pillows near the top of each mattress. He was actually surprised at how clean everything appeared.

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Lily bit her lip and asked the Human, “Now that we’re in here, you can let Richard out, right?” Without hesitation, he bent down to the floor and made the two-meter tall Knight appear out of thin-air.

Elina cast “Holy Cure” on the unconscious cat-man, and then bent down, took off his steel helmet, and smacked his face a few times with her right palm, while yelling “Wake up!”

The moment he opened his eyes, Richard shouted “Gah! Cut that shit out!” as he grabbed the full-helm out of her left hand, and put it back on his head. There was only a narrow ‘T-shaped’ hole, which slightly revealed his nose, lips, and eyes, on the scratched-up piece of armor.

As soon as he saw Michael, he pushed off the ground and withdrew the flamberge on his back, while roaring “You bastard! I’ll fucking slaughter you!” However, surprisingly, both of his comrades stood in front of the Human and began furiously hissing at him. Seeing and hearing that, the huge Knight lowered his weapon and asked “What the hell happened when I was knocked out?”

While the three of them were talking among themselves, Michael sighed and finally released his first prisoner. When the slimy, crimson-skinned, little demon appeared, the Cat-Tribe trio were all startled.

Lily screamed “What the hell is that thing?!” as she jumped backwards and took cover behind the Knight in dull and scratched-up steel armor.

Elina smirked as she answered “A Level-5, Rank-F, Bloodworm-Goblin... I guess he wasn’t just bluffing when he threatened that old woman, huh?”

However, Richard just asked “How the fuck did he just do that? Was it summoning magic?” He wasn’t that concerned about the relatively small and weak, naked, female creature, but completely missed the whole conversation in the bar.

All of the noise managed to awaken the groaning girl; her entire body was incredibly sore, especially her gums and back. The strangest sensations that she experienced were the hundreds of long and skinny bloodworms that grew out of her scalp, after that was the tail, but most importantly was the fact that she couldn’t see.

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Sarah turned over onto her stomach and quietly pushed off the ground, slowly standing upright. Even though she was blind, her sense of smell and touch were enhanced significantly.

She couldn't see visible light, yet when she tried to look around, there was a myriad of colors. Her visual mana-sense had been heightened to such an extent, that she could see the ball of blinding white-light, the bright-red flame, a silver silhouette of an armored man, and a pitch-black void: which made all her feel pure hatred and rage.

When she heard that familiar voice say "Oh hey, congratulations on evolving." her body vanished in a cloud of smoke, and reappeared behind him. Sarah immediately jumped onto his back and used her newly acquired fangs, to tear out the carotid artery on the left side of his neck: causing a huge '-25' to appear, along with a 'critically bleeding' debuff.

The arterial blood sprayed wildly, and by the time Elina was able to cast her healing spell, he had already fallen to the ground and lost his last sliver of Health. However, only a moment after his death, he materialized, completely naked, behind the little girl.

Michael grabbed her worm-like tail with his right hand, while stomping down on the back of her neck, with his left foot. She screamed "Let go of me you immortal bastard! Gah! Rah! Grah!" while struggling to free herself from being pinned against the corpse, but there was nothing that she could do with such low Strength.

He sighed dramatically, then told her "Promise to stop murdering me, and then I'll let you go." His eleventh body was still twitching and spasming, so he quickly reached down with his free hand, and shoved it into bag-slot one; which made the slimy-girl smack against the ground, with a decent amount of force.

Sarah's health dropped to 17/25, and she yelled "Fuck you!" while grabbing his ankle with both hands and trying to sink her fingernails in, but she didn't have them anymore.

Lily was still hiding behind Richard's back, but Elina was excitedly watching the strange wrestling match, and staring at the naked man's posterior. When he died, his new body wasn't created with any of his equipment, so he finally realized the main down-side to death: aside from the horrible agony and pain involved.

Michael sighed with relief, that his corpse didn't lose control of its bowels or bladder, though the pure-white kilt was still drenched in blood and laying underneath the little Bloodworm-Goblin. He squeezed tighter on her slimy tail and calmly told her "Sarah,

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listen, you're adorable and all, but if you keep this shit up, I'm gonna lose my patience. Kill me once, shame on you, kill me twice, shame on me, but if you do it a third time, I'm gonna smash your fuckin skull in and take back that mana-core."

She screamed "Fine, just stop! Ah!" Apparently her pain threshold and Willpower was far lower than The Immortal Human: Her skin was also far more sensitive than it had been before her evolution.

After letting go of the tail, he punted her onto one of the beds, dealing a minuscule amount of damage, but making her lose her breath. Then he reached down and picked up the rabbit-skirt, and put it on, along with the boots, regardless of the fact that they were soaking wet.

Elina, who had been leering at Michael's body, suddenly fell to her knees and began coughing violently. Lily ran over to her side and yelled "What's wrong!? Oh no, is it happening now?!"

Richard cursed "Shit, I thought you said we had a few more days to make it to Carrabelle!" Then there was a deep rumbling, and the whole building started shaking violently.

Michael reached over and grabbed Sarah's tail again, then yanked her away from the bed, as the ceiling immediately caved in on the western side of the room. One deafening roar after another erupted in the cloudy, starless skies, as thousands of small and large, skeletal and zombified dragons soared over the plains.

Each of their levels was in the hundreds, and their ranks were from 'C' all the way up to 'A' at the highest. They didn't even look down at that tiny village, or the entire zone; by simply passing over the region, their minions on the ground would wreak havoc in their names.

The Element of Darkness was so powerful around them, that Priests and other Light-attribute humanoids or magical-beasts, would actually be weakened dramatically. Elina felt like her blood was boiling and her mind became hazy, while Sarah's senses heightened and strengthened to the point, where her pure-white eyes suddenly turned pitch-black: allowing her to see again.

Michael shouted "For fuck's sake! We need to get the hell outta here before the whole building collapses!" Fortunately, there was a door that lead to a balcony, which was still relatively intact.



Richard yelled “Sis, snap outta it!” as he sheathed his flamberge and picked up the nearly unconscious Priestess. Lily quickly ran to the wooden door and threw an explosive fireball out of her right hand, blasting it off the hinges.

The Knight quickly charged out after her, and Michael, while holding the slimy worm-girl under his left arm, followed after them. What they witnessed outside was total darkness, but it was also accompanied by blood-curdling screams, shouting, groaning, deep and terrible roars, plus the crying of women, children, infants and even men.

## Chapter 22: Survival of the Fittest?

As the five of them jumped down from the second floor of the collapsing inn, Sarah yelled “Let me go! Where the fuck do you think you’re touching, bastard?!” Michael did as she asked and released her, just in time for her to fall face-first into the relatively-soft dirt; while he was able to land on his feet, to avoid receiving any damage.

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He shouted “Get up! Oh God, can you smell that?! Not all the horse, cow, pig and chicken shit, but that rotting... fucking zombies! Damn it, I hate zombies! They’re definitely one of the most disgusting monsters in any RPG... ugh, just breathing in the air is already making me sick.”

The moment he took a breath of ‘fresh’ air, he received a ‘plagued’ debuff. Festering boils began rapidly swelling up on his chest, back, and neck, as his lungs began filling with fluids.

Elina muttered “Goddess of Light, please, bless us with your divine protection...” but she passed out before she could finish casting her spell. Lily began coughing violently, while her Health and Stamina fell at a dramatic pace.

Strangely, both Richard and Sarah managed to avoid catching anything. However, that was completely due to her Darkness-affinity, and his abnormally high Luck.

While the Knight carried a cat-girl under each arm, Michael coughed up copious amounts of blood, before dropping to the ground and dying: for the thirteenth time. As his new body formed, he didn’t even bother to collect his corpse or soiled equipment, and just yelled “Run! We need to leave now!”

Sarah screamed “Where?! I don’t even know where the hell we are! Actually, who the fuck are you people?!” In that moment that he was dead, the pitch-black wisp was able to get a great view of the whole scenery, and the problem wasn’t the eight-hundred zombies and skeletons shambling around the little farming village, or the deadly airborne pathogens.

He used his third-person point of view technique, to gain a pseudo night-vision, and shouted “There’s a forest to the east of here! Follow my voice if you can’t see anything!” It was so noisy that even when they were yelling at each-other, they could still barely understand what they were saying.

Richard immediately called back “Wait, no, we need to go north! We have to get to Carrabelle City! They have a Paladin Order and even a High-Priestess of Light! If we can make it there-”

However, he was cut-off by Michael shouting “There’s no time! Besides, I’m pretty sure that all the swarms of undead dragons, giant cockroaches, mosquitoes, mutated bats, and hordes of hulking monstrosities, along with the legions of zombies and skeletons are headed that way! Follow the annoying high-pitched beeeeep~!”

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Fortunately, his 'Immune System Boost' had reached level-three after dying, so his chances of getting sick again had diminished slightly. He didn't bother infusing his voice with mana, because that would have done more harm than good.

In such a situation, even though both the Thief and the Knight had red names toward Michael, they still obediently followed after him. It was the first time that the Human had run, in at least the past five years of his life, and if he didn't have to worry about keeping the other four alive, he probably would have just flew around in his wisp form and spawned a few miles away.

Even though his Stamina was relatively high, he was almost constantly emitting high-pitched beeping noises, so he wasn't able to move very quickly. It didn't matter though, because Richard had to carry two people, and was wearing heavy-armor.

Sarah suddenly screamed "Ah! Shit, get-get the fuck off of me!" as her ankle was suddenly grabbed by a skeletal hand. She easily broke-free, by smacking her relatively thick, slimy and spiky worm-tail against it, but was then impaled through the back by a rusty pitchfork.

Michael immediately saw that, so he stopped beeping and ran to the fallen 'comrade.' However, instead of worrying about her, he pulled a large smooth-stone out of his inventory, and telekinetically fired it at the orc-zombie's head; after it was re-dead, he grabbed the farming-tool and sent it directly into bag-slot fifteen, as a small '+1 Exp' appeared in the corner of his vision.

While she was still screaming in pain, he nonchalantly picked her up with both arms and yelled "Damn it! Hey Rick, hurry the fuck up! There's a shit-ton of skeletal horses and cows charging towards us!"

However, at that moment, Lily's health finally reached zero, and then her race changed to 'Undead Cat-Tribe' as her beautiful skin began rotting away. Richard shouted "No! It's too late for me, please, take my sister and keep going! I know this is a lot to ask of a total stranger, but please, protect her! Arg!?" as he threw the unconscious Priestess at Michael.

Then the reanimated Enchantress cast an 'Enthrall' spell, which caused the Knight to lose his ability to control his own body. Without hesitation, the naked Human grabbed Elna and threw her over his right shoulder: as if she were a sack of flour.

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The bleeding and screaming Bloodworm-Goblin was tightly pressed against his chest, using his left arm, and he couldn't help but yell "The difficulty of these Quests is way too fucking high!" as he continued moving at a steady pace. Since he didn't have to keep beeping any longer, he was able to focus on running and carrying the two, incredibly-light girls.

He carefully avoided all the sluggish zombies and skeletons, while jogging through the darkness. Using his wisp-form, Michael was able to see all of the collapsed, undead-infested buildings; even the farm-animals were transformed into rank-G monsters.

A peculiar aspect to Light Affinity humanoids and beasts, was their ability to resist Darkness-type corruption, curses and diseases. The reason why Elina was so dramatically weakened, was because her mana-core was automatically protecting her body and boosting her immune-system.

After a few minutes of running, Michael finally managed to escape from the village and entered the nearby forest. On the outskirts, it was mostly tree-stumps and cleared away foliage, but as he continued to move farther inside, he noticed that there was finally enough light for him to use his eyes to see.

He could still hear the undead dragons roaring in the distance, and feel the ground rumbling from the seemingly endless hordes that were galloping, sprinting, shambling, and crawling across the plains. However, as soon as he entered "Raphael's Jungle," it was as if there was a barrier preventing the smog and death from polluting that beautiful environment.

It wasn't as severe in the outskirts, but at a certain point, the vines, flowers, insects, and even the level-zero, rankless, deer or parrots were all glowing brightly. Michael muttered "Ugh, I'm gonna be really pissed if I escape from zombie hell, only to die of radiation-poisoning... Well, it should be fine, I might gain a bio-luminescence passive though."

Just to be safe, he kept moving until he started seeing rank-G magical-beasts being created. Some of the largest trees were growing bright-green cherries; groups of small, white and grey, lemurs were eating them, and occasionally, they would get lucky and find a mana-core instead of a seed.

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When they evolved, their tiny bodies only became slightly larger, and their fur turned completely viridian. Aside from that, they didn't change much on the surface, but they definitely gained a decent amount of Agility and Intelligence.

Rather than heading deeper into the jungle, they actually stayed with their families and acted like guardians and leaders for their unranked kin. When they saw Michael, they immediately recognized a threat that they couldn't fight against, so they fled, while protecting their group of lemurs.

It took him a few minutes, but he managed to find the base of a crystal-clear waterfall. He carefully set the two unconscious girls down, only a few feet away from the riverbank.

Sarah's face was still contorted in pain, and her health had dropped down to 5/25, but her 'bleeding' debuff had faded. Elina on the other hand, was only missing a few points from her maximum of twenty.

Michael sighed as he glanced at the two notifications that he ignored, while muttering "This is why I like playing easy-mode..."

The first was "Quest Failed: Riverside Village has been destroyed and Lorekeeper Jonathan has died." Dated a few hours after that was "Quest Failed: Carrabelle City has been destroyed, and that branch of The Adventurer's Guild no longer exists."

## Chapter 23: Losses and Gains

“Quest Completed: After helping the three Cat-Tribe adventurers, a terrible calamity befell Carrabelle Plains, killing the assassins who were seeking the bounty on their heads. Although Richard and Lily died, you still managed to bring Elina to safety.”

Two silver coins appeared in Michael’s currency-tab, and a then his body began glowing with a bright-white light. He heard a monotone, feminine voice saying “You have reached level five.”

### [Player Information

Name: Michael

Titles: The Nudist, The Noob, The Immortal, The Lurker, The Survivor

Level: 5

Experience: 16/50

Age: Adult

Race: Human

Rank: F

Class: None

Specialization: None

Profession: Leatherworker Level 2]

### [Stats

Health: 40/40

Mana: 20/20

Stamina: 20/20

Mana Regen per minute: 30

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Health Regen per hour: 40

Strength: 4

Vitality: 4

Endurance: 4

Dexterity: 3

Agility: 4

Intelligence: 4

Wisdom: 3

Perception: 1

Charisma: 1

Willpower: 14

Luck: 14

Aura: 1.8

Attack Power: 20

Defense Rating: 2]

He immediately sighed after seeing that new title, and muttered “Yeah, pretty sure I died twice tonight, but I guess that didn’t count? Anyway, hopefully with the increased mana-pool and regeneration, I should be able to use magic a little more frequently. Hell, it might even influence my ability to learn new spells. Now, what the hell am I gonna do with all this shit?”

[Bag

Slot-1: Michael’s Human Corpse(F) Level 1(Core-less): 3; Level 2(Core-less): 3; Level 3: 2; Level 3(Core-less): 1; Level 4: 2

Slot-2: Field Mice(G) Level 1: 6; Level 1(Coreless): 1

Slot-3: Blood Cobra(F) Level 3: 1

Slot-4: White Rabbits(G) Level 1: 0; Level 1(Core-less): 11

Slot-5: Small Jagged Rocks: 20 lbs

Slot-6: Leather Strips: 6

Slot-7: Freshwater: 50,000 gallons

Slot-8: Smooth Stones: 50 lbs

Slot-9: Sabertooth Cougar(G) Level 5(Core-less): 1

Slot-10: Blood Worm(F) Level 2(Core-less): 1

Slot-11: Female Goblin Crude Leather Armor, Poor Quality, Level 0: 1

Slot-12: Rusty Iron Daggers, Poor Quality, Level 0(Poisoned): 5

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Slot-13: Crocodile Level 4: 4

Slot-14: Orange Soap, Common Quality: 3

Slot-15: Crude Pitchfork, Poor Quality, Level 0: 1]

Michael groaned, and continued talking to himself: “I was planning on selling all the carcasses in Carrabelle City, but that’s not possible anymore. Shit, I completely forgot about their backpacks... Oh well, hopefully Elina didn’t store some sort of priceless treasure in it. Anyway, there’s no point in keeping Sarah’s shit in my bags, cause she can wear that herself.”

Then he glanced down at the naked, blood-soaked, slimy and grimy Goblin-girl. The worms on her scalp were constantly wriggling around; her tail seemed to have a mind of its own, as it crawled along the ground and devoured some of the dead leaves and branches that were laying near her body.

After leering at her for a few moments, he turned his attention to the soundly sleeping Priestess. Amazingly, the pure-white robe that she was wearing, managed to repel all manner of filth.

Michael even tested it, by picking up a handful of dirt and throwing it at her chest. At first, it simply laid on her relatively large breasts, but it gradually slid off to the sides.

Then he looked down at her freckled face and noticed that it was surprisingly clean, so he dropped some soil onto her forehead. After a few seconds passed, he muttered “I guess it only affects the robe, huh?” He was disappointed, but pretty impressed by the clothing that automatically cleansed itself.

Compared to the four-foot tall Goblin, Michael seemed fairly large; Elina however, was actually a few inches taller than him. She wasn’t particularly fat, though she was certainly heavy.

The naked man was surprised at how much his Strength stat increased his physical capabilities. He obviously wouldn’t have been able to carry the two girls, several miles, while running non-stop, if he didn’t stack Endurance.

Michael suddenly noticed something wriggling around between Elina’s thighs, so he walked over and casually lifted up the bottom of her robe. Then he snickered, and asked himself “Does underwear not exist in this world?”



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A fluffy, black, cat-tail was moving around unconsciously, without any particular rhyme or reason. He kept staring at that surprisingly furry region for a few seconds, before saying “Shit, what the fuck am I doing? Sigh, I’m too used to being able to watch porn whenever I’m horny, or bored... Ugh, I need to masturbate before these two wake-up, but I can’t go too far, cause some random magical-beast might come by and eat them.”

After wading into the extremely warm water, Michael stopped and started using his wisp-form to closely observe the two sleeping girls, while his actual body was facing the waterfall and using one of his bars of soap to scrub himself clean. Of course, once he finished with that, he quickly dealt with his other problem.

The moment his arousal faded, he muttered “Hmmm, not only can astral projection be used to see in the dark, it also seems to have a heat-vision aspect, plus x-rays and... Well, it would definitely have a lot of uses for healing purposes. Unfortunately, looking inside of someone’s body isn’t quite as kinky as I expected it to be. Elina’s probably going to be pretty upset about her friends, or siblings, dying... Oh wow, Worm-Girl’s health is actually full already.”

As Sarah’s tail was devouring and digesting the dead leaves or microbes in the soil, her wounds were slowly regenerating. It was a quirk of her new biology, which increased her survivability significantly.

Michael sighed, and grumbled “Gah, this damn rain-forest is so noisy; it reminds me of... my house, that I’ll probably never be able to return to. I hope my parents aren’t freaking out about my sudden disappearance. If I died in that world, and this is some sort of afterlife, that would probably be for the best. Dear mysterious beings that possibly abducted me; this might be a weird request, but can you please let my family win the lottery or something like that? Aside from all the unfinished novels, I don’t really have any other attachments to that world, and I honestly wouldn’t return there, even if I could. Just let them be happy and move on with their lives.”

As he was talking to himself, Elina finally yawned and lazily stretched her entire body out. She looked around, and saw the strange Bloodworm-Goblin sleeping a few feet away from her; then noticed the huge and incredibly loud waterfall, along with the brightly glowing lightning bugs, trees and other plant-life.

The cat-girl immediately stood up and yelled “Rick! Lily!? Oh no, the key!” as she frantically searched for her backpack. However, she cringed when she examined the golden chain dangling from her left wrist, and used ‘Scan’ on the large, crystalline bead.

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Her yellow irises shone with a pure-white radiance for a few moments, before returning to normal. Tears began rolling down her freckled cheeks, as she read: "Lillian Jacobs has died. Richard Jacobs has died. The Party 'Feline Grace' has been disbanded. Please visit the nearest Adventurer's Guild outpost to receive financial reimbursement for your losses."

Michael sighed as he watched the silently weeping Priestess; she just stood there, while staring listlessly at the constantly flowing waterfall. Eventually, Sarah opened her blinded eyes while groaning, and struggled to stand-up.

She could see the vibrant, green aura of the plants, along with the water's bright-blue radiance, but a familiar, pitch-black sphere was floating on the surface. Her body vanished in a puff of smoke, and reappeared behind his back.

It was the same "Shadow-Step" spell that she had used to kill him twice before, and cost all ten of her mana-points to cast. For a teleportation technique, even with its short range, it was still a very important escaping and attacking skill for the Thief and Assassin classes.

However, with nothing but her fang-like teeth, Sarah's damage wasn't actually that high. When she bit down on the left side of Michael's neck, she didn't managed to land a critical hit: missing veins and arteries.

He yelled "Ow! Damn it, cut that shit out!" as he reached back with both hands, and grabbed her 'hair.' The little worms were very durable, but she still felt incredible pain as he squeezed down on them.

As soon as she opened her mouth to scream, he turned around and grabbed her by the throat with his left hand, and the base of her tail with his right. The grimacing Bloodworm-Goblin screamed "Okay, stop, I give up!" but Michael just dunked her entire body and head underwater.

She struggled furiously to escape his grasp, while holding her breath, but even after two minutes, she was surprised to discover that she didn't actually feel like she was suffocating. After a few more minutes, he let go of her, and allowed her to freely swim around on her own.

When the red-skinned girl finally surfaced again, Michael started laughing and told her "I figured as much. Bloodworms usually live underwater, ya know? Well, I wasn't a hundred percent sure that you could too, but you did just try to murder me again..."

## Arc 3: The Harem Begins

## Chapter 24: Selling Immortality

Sarah scowled at him and asked “Bastard... Have you ever actually killed anyone before?” The only hair left on her entire body, were those two thin eyebrows, which furrowed in anger.

The half-submerged man snickered, and then told her “My name’s Michael by the way, but no. I’ve honestly never had the need, or reason, to kill anyone yet. Well, I’ve been in plenty of fights before coming into this world, but that was at least seven years ago. There were a ton of times where I ‘wanted’ to tear someone’s trachea out, or gouge their fucking eyes out with my fingernails... but I never did. The only reason that I haven’t snapped your scrawny neck already, is because you’re interesting. You should become my Companion.”

She furiously shouted “Why the hell would I ever want to do that?!” while bobbing up and down in the water. The weeping Priestess’ black-furred, cat-ears twitched upon hearing him say that phrase, and managed to return to her senses a bit.

Michael smirked at the worm-girl, and said “Isn’t it obvious? Hehe~, sure, dying might suck, but immortality has its perks too. How long do ya think you’ll live on your own? Goblins have a lifespan of what? Twenty, maybe thirty years... with your evolution, you’ll probably be able to make it to fifty or so, but who knows? Even if you never aged, you would still get killed eventually. Heh, how many people do you think were probably massacred tonight? Sure, you’ll never be able to cut my head off again; if it makes you feel better, each time you die, I’ll suffer from excruciating pain for a few seconds.”

Sarah right eyebrow raised slightly, as she asked “Wait, doesn’t that mean you can directly consume mana-cores to evolve?” While they were speaking, the curious cat-woman slowly entered the water, without even taking off her white-robe.

He immediately glanced over at Elina, but quickly returned his gaze to the slimy Goblin and pulled out a greyish bead from his inventory, into his left palm. Since she didn’t seem to have a ‘Scan’ ability, he directly told her “This is from a Rank-G, Level-1 Field Mouse. Ugh, this is gonna suck...” before swallowing it.

A message popped-up, and he said “Sure, a tenth of an Aura-point, plus half of a Vitality-point, might not be worth the horrible agony I’m feeling right now... but what

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about this?” Then Michael groaned as he retrieved an ominous, pitch-black bead; her face twitched, because she was actually able to recognize it.

Sarah muttered “It has almost the same exact aura as the one in your head right now...” He snickered, before attempting to swallow it, but a barrier appeared and prevented the pearl from entering his mouth.

Then a monotonous female voice resounded in the air around them: “Players may not consume their own mana-cores.”

Michael sighed, and muttered “Well, this is embarrassing...” but the two girls had expressions of amazement, fear, and awe on their faces.

Elina yelled “The Goddess of Light?!” as she frantically looked around, trying to find the source of that ‘divine’ voice.

However, Sarah immediately shouted “What the hell are you talking about?! That was obviously The Goddess of Darkness speaking! It sounds exactly the same as when I learned ‘Shadow-Step,’ ‘Shadow-Cloak,’ and when I leveled-up!”

The Priestess and Thief didn’t have the chance to argue farther, because Michael started laughing hysterically, interrupting their pointless debate. They both glared at him, as if he was mocking their faith, but then he tried to swallow the little black bead again.

As if it was an exact recording, the ‘Goddess’ said “Players may not consume their own mana-cores.” and when he repeated the action, “Players may not consume their own mana-cores.” resounded again. There was absolutely no difference between the three phrases, and he didn’t even receive some sort of punishment for attempting to defy her will.

They both stared at him, as if he were going to suddenly burst into flames or be struck by lightning; yet even after the tenth time, nothing happened. Michael finally stopped and told them “That isn’t some divine entity... It’s obviously just an automated message that plays every time someone tries to break the rules of this world. Do you honestly believe that some supreme being is going to personally yell at every asshole who does something they aren’t supposed to? How many millions of creatures in this world gain skills and level-up every second?

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“Even if I’m the only ‘Player’ in this whole fucking universe, I still get a damn synthesized, mechanical voice... How do you even know it’s female anyway? Sure, it might sound kinda feminine, but still, have any of you even seen these Goddesses?”

Elina yelled “Bl-blasphemy!” Although, she wasn’t able to retort any farther than that. At least she was able to temporarily forget about her brother and sister dying, because the very foundation of her entire belief-system was on the verge of collapsing.

Sarah on the other hand, simply furrowed her brows and squinted her pure-white eyes, before muttering “I always did wonder why The Goddess of Darkness would bother talking to someone like me...” She was obviously a lot more open-minded than the cat-girl: at least when it came to religion.

Then Michael said “Well, for all I know, there might actually be some kinda overpowered deity for every element. I mean, something must have created this world, right? Who or what, I have no clue... I just got here a few days ago after-all. There’s definitely some sort of system, which governs this entire reality, and I don’t have the ability to edit it in any way.

“However, back to my original sales-pitch; be my Companions. It’s not like I’m asking you to marry me; ya probably don’t even have to stay with me. I won’t say that either of you are particularly ‘lucky,’ but this is seriously the most important decision of either of your lives! Also, I’m pretty sure that you don’t actually have to be near me to keep the immortality. Well, I wouldn’t want to test that theory though, heh.”

Then he pulled out a second pitch-black bead, which was still covered in a bit of vomit; Michael gagged a bit, before tossing it to Sarah. He handed the other one to Elina and told them “I’ll even throw in these fancy, level-four, rank-F mana-cores. I wouldn’t suggest taking them until after you agree to be my Companions though.”

Surprisingly, the irritable Goblin-girl was the first to say “You’re a fucking moron, but if I didn’t take advantage of your stupidity, then I would be the real idiot. Now hurry up and make me your Companion.”

The moment she finished speaking, her name changed directly from bright-red, to dark-green. As he smirked, that monotone voice asked him “Would you like to accept ‘Sarah Carelia’ as your second Companion? Warning: You may only have a maximum of six Companions.”

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Hearing her 'Goddess' speak, Elina suddenly stopped hesitating and also made her decision. Michael snickered and then answered "Yep!" which caused both of their bodies to glow with blindingly bright radiance, and then her entire status-screen popped-up in-front of his face.

[Companion Information

Name: Sarah  
Titles:  
Level: 5  
Experience: 10/50  
Age: Adult  
Race: Bloodworm-Goblin  
Rank: F  
Class: Thief  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

Health: 25/25  
Mana: 10/10  
Stamina: 15/15

Mana Regen per minute: 10  
Health Regen per hour: 20  
Strength: 1  
Vitality: 2  
Endurance: 3  
Dexterity: 3  
Agility: 5  
Intelligence: 2  
Wisdom: 1  
Perception: 2  
Charisma: 2

Willpower: 5  
Luck: 3  
Aura: 1

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Attack Rating: 5  
Defense Rating: 1.5]

[Passives

Immune System Boost Level 5: Resists level five infectious diseases and illnesses.

Superior Regeneration Level 1: Organs and bones that have been lost, can be completely regenerated. Recovery speed is dependent on the amount of mana consumed.

Cutaneous Respiration Level 1: Able to absorb oxygen through the skin, as long as it's properly hydrated. Effectiveness is dependent on Vitality.

Darkness Affinity Level 2: Dark environments increase the speed of health and mana recovery. Increases damage to enemies with Light Affinity by 20%.

Dagger Mastery Level 3: Increases Attack Rating while wielding knives, short-swords, and daggers by 15%.]

[Spellbook

Shadow-Step Level 3: Teleports into the target's shadow. Range is dependent on Agility. Costs ten mana-points to activate.

Shadow-Cloak Level 2: Creates a shroud of darkness around the caster and all allies within range. Range is dependent on the Aura stat. Costs one mana-point per second.])



## Chapter 25: An Elemental Tutorial

When the radiance faded, Elina looked into Michael's dark-brown eyes, and asked him "Before I become your Companion, I want to know something first. How did my brother and sister..."

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Before she could finish her sentence, he sighed and answered “Well, I didn’t actually see the big guy die, but Lily turned into an undead and cast an ‘Enthrall’ spell on him. Before that though, he managed to toss you over to me, so... I mean, there wasn’t much I could do for either of them. The little brat was bleeding to death, and you were unconscious; it’s kinda amazing that either of you survived that shit. Oh yea, Sarah, your father’s dead by the way... not sure if you care though.”

After hearing that, her only response was “Meh, figured as much already.” before continuing to explore her new-found ability to see her own stats. She never learned how to read or write, and yet somehow, she could perfectly understand the mysterious, semi-transparent info-screen that had appeared before her.

Even Michael was somewhat surprised by the worm-girl’s attitude, but then he returned to the crying Priestess. She struggled to say “Please... let me become your Companion.”

He was once again asked by that monotonous feminine voice “Would you like to accept ‘Elina Jacobs’ as your third Companion? Warning: You may only have a maximum of six Companions.”

After answering with an “uh-huh,” while nodding his head, the two of them were enveloped in a warm and blinding radiance. At that point he had become pretty used to that sensation, but the cat-girl felt as if all of the pain and sadness in her soul was being cleansed.

[Companion Information

Name: Elina  
Titles:  
Level: 6  
Experience: 37/60  
Age: Adult  
Race: Cat-Tribe  
Rank: G  
Class: Priestess of Light  
Specialization: Healing  
Profession: Enchanter Level 3]

[Stats

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Health: 20/20  
Mana: 30/30  
Stamina: 5/5  
Mana Regen per minute: 40  
Health Regen per hour: 30

Strength: 1  
Vitality: 2(+1)  
Endurance: 1  
Dexterity: 2  
Agility: 2  
Intelligence: 5(+1)  
Wisdom: 3(+1)  
Perception: 2  
Charisma: 1

Willpower: 3  
Luck: 2  
Aura: 3

Attack Power: 5  
Defense Rating: .5(+1)]

[Passives

Blessing of Good Health Level 3: Resists Level-3 infectious diseases, illnesses and curses. Effectiveness will automatically double at the expense of mana, when exposed to Level-4 or higher infectious diseases, illnesses or curses.

Light Affinity Level 4: Mana and Health recovery increases dramatically when exposed to Sunlight and Moonlight. Increases healing done to allies with the Light Affinity by 40%.

Holy Light Level 3: All healing spells cost 15% less, and healing done is increased by 30%, when exposed to Sunlight or Moonlight.]

[Spellbook

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Scan Level 5: Identifies the object and gives detailed information. Only effective on items below the rare quality and within twenty levels of the caster.

Identification Level 6: Shows the target's current Health, Mana, Stamina, Name, Title, Age, Profession, Class, Level, Rank, Race and Specialization. Only effective on targets that are within thirty levels of the caster.

Flash-Heal Level 4: Instantly recovers a small amount of health. Range is dependent on the Aura stat. Potency is dependent on Intelligence. Costs ten mana per cast.

Healing Light Level 5: Slowly recovers a large amount of health. Range is dependent on the Aura stat. Potency is dependent on Intelligence. Costs three mana per second.

Holy Cure Level 3: Removes poisons, stuns, curses and other similar debuffs from the target. Effectiveness is dependent on Intelligence.

Illumination Level 3: Creates large amounts of radiant light, which slightly increases health regeneration for allies, while dealing minor damage to enemies. Range is dependent on the Aura stat. Costs six mana per minute.

Blinding Light Level 2: Burns and blinds enemies with large bursts of ultraviolet radiation. Range is dependent on the Aura stat. Twice as effective on enemies of the Darkness Affinity.]

Michael wasn't particularly impressed by her stats, spells or passives, but he was intrigued that she was a level-three Enchanter. Although, he had to ask "Elina... is having two points of Luck, normal?"

The cat-girl was amazed at the status-screen that had popped-up in-front of her face; yet, unlike Sarah, the Priestess had been an adventurer for quite a while, so she had seen something similar before. She frowned, and told him "The highest I've ever seen was seven, and the average is either two or three. This is amazing though! Normally, you have to go to the Guildhall and pay a fee to access an Empowering Stone, but with this... the moment you level-up, you should be able to place your stat-points right away!"

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Hearing that, Michael turned towards the worm-girl and asked “If that’s true, then how the hell did she place all her stat-points already?”

Elina chuckled, before replying “If a person doesn’t access an Empowering Stone within a few months of leveling-up, they’ll be invested automatically. It’s usually not a big deal, but if I wanted to gain something other than Wisdom or Intelligence, then I would need to invest them manually.”

While the two of them were wading, half-submerged in crystal-clear water, Sarah washed off the little black bead and unhesitantly swallowed it. A screen appeared before her, which read “Stats have increased after digesting a level--four, rank ‘F’ Human’s mana--core: Aura +.5, Vitality +1, Strength +1.”

It was a massive boost to her physical capabilities... but came with a rather steep price. A bloodcurdling scream erupted from her throat, because she felt as if every bone in her body was shattered, and all of her muscles spasmed uncontrollably.

Regardless of the pain and suffering the red-skinned girl was experiencing, her Health, which had reached a maximum of thirty-points, was barely even dropping. Michael snickered, and muttered “Did I forget to mention the unbearable agony? Well, whatever...” as he glanced at Sarah: She was splashing around under the water, unable to drown, even if she wanted to.

Elina stopped crying and handed the mana-core back to him, then said “It’s not that I’m afraid of the pain, or death, but I can’t use this to evolve.” while frowning. As he sent it back into his first bag-slot, she explained “Ah, you really don’t seem to know anything about Affinities, huh? Hmmm, basically... as far as I know, there are only nine ‘Primal Elements.’ I’m obviously not a mage, so please don’t expect me to know all the different aspects of them though.

“Let’s see, from what I remember in the Priestess Convent, the top of the pyramid was the Arcane Element. That’s basically pure mana, and while it’s sometimes called the epitome of magic, it’s usually limited to manipulating objects with your mind and illusions... My sister was originally a Fire-Mage, but when she evolved to rank-G, she was blessed with a second Affinity.”

Before she could continue, Michael interrupted “Wait a second, I thought you said that everyone’s born with one? Doesn’t that mean that there’s no limit to the amount of affinities a person can have?”

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She sighed, and told him “Only a lucky few are able to be born with one, but it’s much more common among magical-beasts, demons, monsters, and Elves. There are only two ways to gain an affinity: Either upon birth, or evolution. This is important though; aside from Arcane, every other Element has weaknesses and strengths.”

He snickered and asked “Yeah, that makes more sense... Otherwise, the balance would be totally broken. Anyway, so what are the others?”

Elina replied “Okay, so directly underneath Arcane, is Light and Darkness. They’re mutually opposing Elements, and it’s impossible for a single entity to possess affinities for both at the same time. Below those two are Nature and Chaos, which also counter each-other.”

Michael interjected “So I could have Arcane, Light, and Nature, all at the same time. The only problem is that I would be weak to Darkness and Chaos magic.”

However, she shook her head and explained “No, not just spells... any kind of weapon or attack that was used by a person or beast of those affinities. Anyway, stop interrupting me! Hmmm~, back to what I was saying; the last four are the most confusing for me, because they form a circle. Fire, Wind, Earth and Water... in that order. They’re different though, because a person can actually gain all of those affinities at the same time.

“Unfortunately, for every strength, there’s a glaring weakness, so there are few people reckless enough to have the maximum of seven affinities. Unlike you, or I suppose it’s ‘us’ now, normal adventurers have to worry about preserving their little lives. Wait, stop, I’m not done talking yet!

“Okay, hah~, so there’s another reason why people tend to stick with a single Element. Other than my devotion to the Goddess of Light, which hasn’t wavered in the slightest, and the fact that I don’t want to lose my adorable Cat-Tribe traits; evolving with a blank mana-core is a waste.

“The highest rank is ‘SSS,’ so there are only ten possible chances for a person to evolve. Actually, most adventurers only have one or two chances, since anything above ‘E’ is pretty much reserved for magical-beasts and Elves, or for those who are really talented and lucky. Phew~, the point is... it’s really hard to level-up Affinities, and can take years of intense training, meditation, life-and-death battles, prayer, sacrifices or whatever that specific Element requires.

“I reached rank-G after fifteen years of devotion to my Goddess, and I’ve spent the last ten years trying to reach level-five... I should be able to make it there in a few months, but you can probably see the problem, right? Yet, if I consumed a rank-F mana-core, from a Light-Element magical-beast, or person, I would automatically increase my Affinity-level by one.”

Michael smirked as he asked “So what you’re trying to tell me, is that you wanna skip the hundreds or thousands of years worth of boring meditation and prayer, so you can get nine easy levels from evolving? There’s something I’m kinda curious about though... Is it really okay for you to kill other people and animals that have been ‘blessed’ by your Goddess?”

She frowned, and answered “The Priestess Order of Healing Light has many rules regarding purity of body and soul, which were developed to ensure the fastest possible cultivation speed. It would be nearly impossible for me to win a duel against someone of a higher rank, and evolving by swallowing a mana-core is practically suicide. There are many sects and religions that follow the Goddess of Light, and between the races, there have been many holy wars. Power is typically all that matters in the end... If I was stronger, I could have saved my brother and sister; my whole family would still be alive if they weren’t so damn weak.”

Right after she stopped talking, a message popped-up in-front of Michael: “Now that you’ve learned about all of the Elements, please choose your primary Affinity.”

## Chapter 26: The First Affinity

Michael muttered “Shit, I hate having to make these kinds of decisions... Well, I can have a maximum of seven, so it isn’t too bad. Even if she doesn’t tell me all the specifics of every Element, I can pretty much guess what they’re like, based on pretty much any RPG I’ve ever played. It makes sense that Space and Time aren’t included, since all magic has spatial and temporal aspects: Sarah can teleport for fuck’s sake.”

After she read the semi-transparent message box that had appeared before the naked man, Elina yelled “What?! You actually get choose your affinity?!” The fact that he was complaining about it, made the situation even stranger.

He snickered and casually asked “Hey, what’s the rarest Element? I’m gonna end up getting everything but Darkness and Chaos, so aside from those two, which is the hardest to find?”

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She shouted “Did you miss the whole speech about how you should stick with only a single Element?!” Once she managed to calm down a bit, she ‘calmly’ said “Fine, whatever, just don’t complain to me later. The problem with what you’re trying to do, is that there are a decent amount of dual and triple affinity magical-beasts. They aren’t usually that picky about it, and just try to evolve as fast as possible. When there’s more than one Element present in a mana-core, it’s up to your Luck to decide what you get from it. Arcane would probably be the hardest to find.”

Michael smiled at her as he made his decision, and was suddenly enveloped by a blinding radiance. When it stopped, there was a notification: “Arcane Affinity Level 1: Increases mana and health regeneration dramatically, inside of dungeons.”

He snickered for a few seconds and then told her “Yeah, that’s the one I picked. It seems pretty intense too... hehe~, definitely the best choice for a hardcore raider like myself.”

It was at that point when he finally reached down and grabbed the squirming Bloodworm-Goblin. Even though she could breathe through her skin, that particular skill was only at level-one, so she was actually starting to drown.

She still had lungs after-all, and they were completely filled with water, so he decided to pull her over to the shore and... remove it. Surprisingly, Sarah was still conscious, even after suffering for so long, Michael told her “Calm down kid, stop squirming around. This is definitely not an excuse to touch your nonexistent breasts, so cut it out. Heh~, telekinesis is so overpowered...”

With one hand on each side of her chest, he channeled his mana through her skin, muscle and bones, before shoving it into all of the fluids that were drowning her. Then he turned his head away from her, and slowly pushed it all out of her lungs, up her trachea, and out of her mouth.

He gagged a little, then grumbled “Eww, so gross, ugh, good thing I have soap, or I would be really fucking pissed right now.”

After coughing a few times, Sarah screamed “Bastard, how the hell is this worth two stat-points!?” Her health was down to 13/30, but it wasn’t continuing to drop, because of her relatively high Vitality.



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Michael sighed, and told her “Well, it’s about the same as leveling-up... but yeah, it’s pretty fucking horrible. You’ll probably have a stroke or heart-attack after surviving this part, and die anyway.” before picking up the ‘paralyzed’ girl, and carrying her into the water again.

He noticed that her body had become significantly heavier after taking that mana-core, and figured that it involved her muscles and bones becoming denser, since her physical size didn’t actually change. After dropping the worm-girl in the shallow water, he continued towards where Elina was floating and said “I thought cats hated water... Ah, was that racist?”

While gazing up at the starry sky, through the jungle canopy, the Priestess sighed and muttered “We’re closer to Humans than actual cats...” Her drenched white-robe was almost completely transparent, so he couldn’t help ogling.

Elina turned her head towards him and asking “Are you enjoying the view?” which caused him to start snickering. Then he pulled a bar of orange soap out of his bag and began using it to furiously scrub away all the slimy liquid that Sarah had spewed on him.

Michael dove underwater and after surfacing, he told her “I’ll admit, one of the main reasons I decided to make the two of you my Companions, was for the view. I can’t really masturbate to this one...” as a dog-sized, Triple-Tailed Fox materialized in his arms.

Upon being summoned, Inari immediately squirmed out of his grasp and splashed around in the water, while yelping loudly. Obviously, she was very confused by the strange situation; the last thing that she could remember, was being in front of that inn.

The Priestess looked at the pure-white vixen and exclaimed “Aww, she’s so~ cute~.” as she stopped floating and stood up. Both of them were fairly similar in their attraction to adorable animals.

He snickered as Inari ‘doggy-paddled’ around his body, while being excessively noisy. Elina asked “Are you a Beast Tamer?” while examining the fox with her ‘Identification’ spell.

Michael sighed at her, and said “You already know the answer to that, right? It would be kinda pointless for me to pick a Class like that... Well, I guess there would be a bunch of benefits to my magical-beast Companions, and I could probably be really lazy. Anyway, I’m starving, and so is the little puppy; do you eat meat?”

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She nodded, and then commented “Adventurers can’t really be picky about their meals. Although, before my first mission, I used to be a vegetarian. Back in the Convent, they didn’t let us eat anything but sanctified rice, sacred fruit, blessed vegetables and we only drank holy water.” as the two people, and one fox, slowly made their way to the riverbank.

He started laughing hysterically, and then felt something slimy wrapping around his ankle, causing him to fall forward and almost smack his face into some jagged rocks. However, he was able to use his hands to avoid being blinded, and immediately turned to the culprit, while yelling “Seriously, what the hell’s your problem?! Aside from being a ‘mostly’ blind, worm-girl, suffering from horrible, agonizing, and unending pain.”

Her ‘paralysis’ debuff had disappeared, and her health was already up to 19/30, so she was just barely able to stand. Sarah growled “You tricked me again!” while snarling at him, but she couldn’t even vent her anger by killing him anymore.

Michael sighed, as he stood up and said “How? The first time, you stole the mana-core from me, after cutting my head off. That rank-F Bloodworm was really hard to kill, ya know? Anyway, I didn’t trick you; I just neglected to explain the exact side-effects. Okay, so what what kinda meat do you guys want? I’ve got field-mouse, crocodile, cougar, rabbit, cobra, and umm... human: specifically, me.”

In each of his outstretched palms suddenly appeared a hunk of writhing, bloody, muscle-mass. He had taken a little bit from each carcass, excluding his own corpses, and ended up with a bright-red mash-up of raw meat.

Seeing that, Elina immediately grimaced, while gagging, and yelled “Dear Goddess... what is that?!” It was actually fairly similar to Michael’s first reaction, but after doing it a few times already, he had already gotten used to the grotesque scene.

Inari immediately jumped up and knocked the ‘meat-ball’ out of his right hand, quickly starting to eat it off of the vine-covered ground. He scolded “Bad girl! Ugh, I’m kinda glad I didn’t try to turn this brat into some sort of furry fox-girl. Besides, that would be way too cliché...”

After that, he grabbed a big clump and threw it at Sarah’s face. Since it contained a large amount of mana, she was able to see it, but when she tried to catch it, a large portion escaped her grasp.

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She grumbled “You are such an asshole...” as she began ferociously devouring the bloody meal. As for Elina, he simply handed a glob of the practically living muscle to her.

Unfortunately, even if she wasn’t picky, she still didn’t want to eat something quite that ‘raw.’ When he told her “Sorry, but I don’t know any fire-magic.” she remembered all the times her sister used to cook food for them, and light the campfires at night.

Considering that less than eight hours before that, both of her siblings had died, it was completely natural for the cat-girl to be rather depressed. However, then Michael said “Oh yea, I can’t believe I actually forgot about that...” before taking back the clump of meat and activating ‘Electrocution.’

Both the smaller and larger balls had quickly turned from a bright, juicy crimson, to a light-brown. It obviously stopped twitching and instead, hardened into a solid form: leaking boiling grease all over his palms.

He hyperventilated a few times while ignoring his health dropping by a few points, and asked her “Is it okay now? Normally I would use a bunch of sweet teriyaki sauce when making burgers, but this is about the best that I can do under these circumstances.”

Elina bit her lip, and took the cooked meat-ball from his hands and blew on it a few times, before taking a small bite. She replied “Thank you for the meal, it’s very tasty.” while smiling faintly, and trying not to cry.

## Chapter 27: An Awkward Beginning to a Hardcore Adventure

After the four of them had finished eating, Michael glanced at the naked Bloodworm-Goblin, then at the freckled cat-girl, whose robe was soaking wet and practically transparent. He sighed, and told them “We need to wear clothes, or I’m gonna end up having a permaboner.”

Sarah immediately asked “What the fuck’s a permaboner?” which caused him to start laughing hysterically. Inari went to sleep as soon as she scoffed down her pile of raw meat, but she wouldn’t have made a meaningful impact into the conversation anyway.

However, Elina quickly replied “Probably a permanent erection...” while staring at his penis for a few seconds, and then saying “Shouldn’t you go, take care of that?” Even after hearing that, the relatively blind girl, still had no idea what they were talking about.

Michael smirked, as he nonchalantly explained “Nah, I just masturbated less than an hour ago. Even if I jerked off over and over again, as long as I’m surrounded by beautiful naked-women, I’ll be stuck in this condition. Sarah, I have your shitty gear, which is barely any better than garbage. Here, take it!” She wasn’t even able to see the mana-less armor, as it appeared in the palm of his hand, and was promptly thrown at her chest.

The thin and crude leather only gave her a single point of Defense Rating, even though it was practically a full set of equipment: all that was missing, was the helmet. She shouted “Oh, ha-ha, throw things at the blind-girl! Real fucking funny!” He was still holding a slight grudge against her for murdering him, twice.

There were a decent amount of holes and patches on the armor, and Elina actually had to help her put it on. Most of it was just brown cloth, with the actual leather only covering her breasts, thighs, wrists, and shins; there were both boots, belt and bracers included in the set.

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Between the ripped shirt and pants, the base of her tail had plenty of room to dangle out. He smiled and told her “Yeah, that’s much better. As long as I don’t abuse my ability to see through your clothes, I should be fine.”

With that dealt with, he then transformed ten of the remaining rank-G, level-one, bunnies, into pelts. After that, he swiftly sacrificed one of the field-mouse mana-cores to recreate his set of white-rabbit fur kilt and boots.

The moment he donned the new equipment, his Agility increased to five, and his Defense Rating doubled: reaching four. Then he reached down and placed Inari in his first Companion-slot, while telling the two girls “Now, it’s time for us to hunt.”

Sarah grumbled “You have my knives, right?” to which he sighed, and casually tossed the five, rusty, poisoned daggers at her face. However, a barrier appeared, causing them to suddenly stop a few millimeters from her bright-red skin, and fall into her tiny deft hands.

The partially clothed Human turned on his ‘Mini-Map’ and the worm-girl immediately asked “What the hell is this thing? Ah, one of em popped-up in-front of me too.”

Elina muttered “She doesn’t even know what a map is? Hmm, I’ve never heard of Raphael’s Jungle...” before exclaiming “This-this is ‘The Forbidden Forest!?’ Michael, how did you even make it this far inside?!”

He snickered as he started walking towards the west, away from the waterfall, and said “While I was carrying the two of you, I just kept running in this direction. There was a gigantic horde of undead that were about trample us, but for whatever reason, none of them entered this beautiful... noisy, annoying, sweaty, and seemingly endless rain-forest. I did feel a little disoriented at first, but I have an automatically updating map, so it’s not like I could get lost, heh.”

Sarah yelled “Ow, damn it! Hey, wait for me!” as she scratched her slimy tail against a thorny bush, and nearly tripped over some vines. From her perspective, she had only been unable to see for less than a day, so she obviously wasn’t able to walk properly on her own.

Elina frowned as she gently led the Goblin by the hand, and told her “The next time you level-up, you should focus on raising your Perception. I’ve known quite a few people who’ve lost their sight, but were able to regain their vision that way.”

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At that, Michael snickered and suggested “Or~, we could do some monkey hunting... I definitely saw some ‘tarsiers’ while I was trying to find a place to rest. They’re basically tiny primates with big-ass eyeballs, so I figure that if we find a couple that have evolved, you should be able to get a decent amount of Perception from their mana-cores.”

However, she immediately shouted “Fuck no! I’d rather be blind than have to experience that bullshit again!”

He sighed and told her “Calm down, the trick is to wait until you’re about to get killed by some magical-beasts, then swallow a handful. Hehe~, it’s practically cheating, but ya do kinda have to die, so either way, it’s probably gonna suck.”

The Priestess, whose white-robe was surprisingly already dried, asked “How can you talk about dying so casually? Even if you are immortal to a certain extent, how could you possibly be sure that you’ll be able to keep coming back to life? There might be some kind of horrible price that you have to pay for each time...”

Michael answered her questions by making a screen pop-up before her eyes, which made her shout “Wh-what is this?! Gameplay?!” Once she settled down a bit, Elina muttered “No death penalty, Friendly-Fire is off? Are these The Laws of The Goddesses?”

Then he explained “You are right in a way though. At the moment, I’m the only ‘Player’ and I can’t actually alter the settings, but who the hell knows if those rules will change or not. That’s why, while respawning is ‘free’ and ‘quick,’ the three-er four of us, need to hurry up and become as powerful as possible. Pray to your Goddess that no other people from my world are brought into this one... It’ll be Noobageddon.”

As the three of them were loudly yelling and talking to each-other, while continuing to walk deeper into the forest, level-one magical-beasts continued to flee away from the dangerous humanoids. Michael had used his wisp form at maximum altitude, to see a fairly mountain in the western distance, but he also noticed a decent amount of colossal animal-shaped treants, prowling or lumbering around.

Green and brown wyverns, along with other airborne creatures were flying above the canopy, and a decent amount of rainbow-colored bird-like dragons seemed to be the aerial rulers of the jungle. However, they were very slowly trudging in that general direction; even if there were no monsters to fight, it would have still taken them a week to walk that far at their sluggish pace.

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After an hour of trudging along the first enemy finally appeared. Michael and Elina had been quietly humming when Sarah yelled “Shut the fuck up!” Then she whispered “How is it that I’m the blind one, yet neither of you can see that giant pitch-black monster over there?” while pointing towards a normal-looking tree. Letting go of the cat-girl’s hand, she pulled out two poisoned daggers.

Her body suddenly vanished in a puff of smoke, as she appeared on one of the low-hanging branches, and stabbed both weapons into a relatively thick, yellow vine. A huge, bright-orange, ‘-27’ popped-up, accompanied by a loud hissing sound.

She immediately jumped a few meters backward, and used her slimy worm-like tail to latch onto the branch, and avoid the creature’s counterattack. The moment that the description “Stealthy Boa-Constrictor, Level-9, rank-F,” was visible to him, Michael pulled the ‘Crude Pitchfork’ out of his inventory, and threw it like a javelin.

Before the snake had the chance to lunge at Sarah, the thickest portion of its body was impaled upon the tree, and its health quickly dropped down to 25/80. Elina didn’t even have the time to realize what was going on, before he pulled out a handful of tiny, jagged rocks, and telekinetically launched them at the immobile serpent.

A myriad of negative numbers appeared as the deadly-poison, along with the barrage of pebbles and the various ‘bleeding’ debuffs swiftly slaughtered the magical-beast. Then a ‘+6 Exp’ could be momentarily seen above each of their heads.

After that, Michael yelled “Oi, good job brat, now pull the pitch-fork out and toss the bastard down!” However, without listening to him, she walked over to the boa’s relatively large head, and used her knife to dig-out the mana-core.

She shouted “This one’s mine!” as she placed the tiny black bead into one of her belt-pouches. Then she used all of her strength, but wasn’t able to remove the three-pronged pitch-fork from the tree’s bark, so she just used her daggers to slice open its body and allowed it to fall to the ground.

He sighed and said “Ugh, sure, whatever... don’t worry about the damn pitch-fork, and I honestly don’t give a shit if you wanna keep the fucking mana-core. It’s just that, when you die, you’ll probably lose it, so it’s better if you let me keep it with the rest of this asshole’s corpse.” as he reached down and shoved the two halves of the snake into bag-slot eleven.

It was at that moment when he received a strange notification: “Would you like to unlock Companion bag-space for Sarah Carelia? The first slot will cost a rank-G mana-core of at least level-one.”

## Chapter 28: The Leeching Healer

Michael snickered as he unhesitantly sacrificed two rank-G mana-cores, which belonged to level-one field-mice. Then both Elina and Sarah suddenly received messages at the same time: “Bag-slot one has been unlocked.”

He wanted to keep adding more, but the second slot required a level-ten rank-G mana-core. The confused Priestess asked “What just happened? Does this mean that I can store things like you do now?”

Without thinking too deeply about it, Sarah immediately placed the tiny black-bead into her newly acquired bag-slot, and hopped down from the tree-branch. Though she



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swiftly fell from a height of four meters, her relatively high Agility allowed her to avoid any damage or injuries.

However, Elina had to hold her hand again, so that she wouldn't trip over the various vines or walk into any of the small bushes. Michael finally answered "Yeah, pretty much... Just imagine placing something into it, and it'll... nice, hahaha~."

The first thing she tried to store was the robe that she was wearing, which instantly disappeared, and left her with nothing but a golden bracelet, and a thin silver necklace. She started giggling and quickly tried to pull her item out of her inventory again.

Strangely though, when she imagined wearing the gown, rather than simply making it appear in her palm, the white-robe actually appeared onto her body automatically. Which caused Michael to smirk, as he muttered "So there's even an auto-equip feature, huh? Heh~, isn't that way too convenient? Well, there might be a restriction for combat situations..."

Sarah completely missed what was happening, so she was grumbled "Can you two idiots stop fucking around? We're in the middle of a jungle filled with monsters, and I can only just barely make-out their auras... Start paying attention to our surroundings."

Hearing that, Elina sighed and agreed "Yeah, we really shouldn't be so incautious... Michael, you might be used to it already, but I'd prefer to avoid dying any time soon." as she activated her 'Identification' skill, and used it to scan their surroundings. After glancing to the left, she saw a handful of different magical-beasts, the same when she looked forward and to their right.

After a few seconds she pointed towards the south and yelled "Tiger!" as a three meter long, relatively normal-sized 'Bengal Tiger, Level-9, Rank-G,' started slowly approaching them. It's fur was orange and white, with black stripes, and it had bright-blue eyes, which glowed fiercely.

The Priestess, with relatively low Willpower, was immediately 'terrified' and couldn't even think rationally, as she just curled up into a ball and started crying. Sarah yelled "How the hell did someone like you even become a fucking adventurer?!"

She immediately teleported behind the majestic beast, and used her rusty blades like a pair of scissors, violently castrating the 'male' tiger. It let out a furious roar as it received 'bleeding,' 'stunned,' and 'enraged' debuffs; the creature's HP had only dropped to 74/90 though.

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However, before the giant cat was able to recover, Michael walked over to its head, then casually removed a smooth-stone from his inventory. He frowned and whispered “Sorry kid, but ya shouldn’t have fucked with us...” as he began viciously bashing its snout, and skull apart.

A slew of numbers started to appear: ‘-14,’ ‘-12,’ ‘-15,’ ‘-13,’ ‘17.’ Considering that his Attack Rating was twenty, and he was even using a primitive weapon, the tiger’s Defense Rating was obviously fairly high.

Unfortunately for the beast, each blow increased the ‘stun’ timer, so it was completely unable to retaliate. Then the last three health-points were lost from the blood-loss and poison; thus, the majestic animal was thoroughly slaughtered by the blind Thief, and the immortal, classless Human.

Even though she didn’t actually participate in the one-sided battle, Elina still received ‘+3 Exp’ along with the two who did all the work. Before Sarah had the chance to claim the mana-core, Michael stored the whole carcass into his twelfth bag-slot.

He sighed as he dropped the fragmented and blood-soaked stone onto the ground, muttering “Ugh, I don’t even care anymore... no matter how many times I wash myself off, I’ll just get covered in fucking animal-juice after every goddamn fight.”

After the caster was dead, the fear spell wore-off, and the blushing Priestess stood up, while biting her lip nervously. Michael glanced at her and said “You seem more embarrassed about being feared, than letting me see you naked... Actually, are you a nudist? Cause most ‘normal’ people can’t casually shrug off that kinda shit.”

She immediately retorted “You’re the nudist! You even have a title to prove it! Do you see something like that next to my name? Anyway, I’m an adventurer; which means that I can’t afford to get upset over such petty things... Also, I have to pee, so give me a minute.”

Sarah tilted her head and muttered “That’s weird, I haven’t had to piss or shit since I evolved...” as the cat-girl squatted near a large tree and stored her robe, before starting to urinate.

Michael to began laughing hysterically, as he revealed “Ah, that’s because you’ve been constantly doing both without even realizing it. That tail of yours is also always munching on dirt and leaves, plus you’re probably absorbing a ton of moisture from the

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air, so I doubt that you even need to eat or drink anything using your actual mouth either. It's kinda gross, but at the same time, seems pretty convenient."

The Bloodworm-Goblin was blind, so she couldn't see what her tail was doing, and since it was unconsciously acting on its own, it was impossible for her to 'feel' something like that as well. In the middle of the wilderness, it didn't really make much of a difference, but if they were in a city... things would be different.

Once the Priestess was finished watering the plants with her stream of surprisingly clear liquid, the three of them began continuing towards the south. If they had kept going west, then they would eventually face enemies that they couldn't possibly defeat.

Each battle between Michael, Sarah, and the magical-beasts that they faced, was typically ended very quickly. However, upon killing the fifth 'Bengal Tiger, Level-9, Rank-G,' Elina was engulfed in a blindly-bright radiance.

She wiped the tears off of her face, as she recovered from the 'terrify' debuff, and yelled "Ah, I actually reached level-seven so quickly!? This is amazing!" Normally, a party of adventurers would be much larger, so each kill gave far less experience per person; most importantly though, was the fact that no one would risk their lives, fighting against magical-beasts that were several levels above them.

Sarah immediately screamed "What the fuck?! I've been working my ass off, while she hasn't even cast a single healing spell, and she's the first one to level-up?! Hey, Dumbass, why don't you do the same thing to her that you did to the damn dog earlier!?"

Michael snickered and ignored the whiny goblin-girl, asking "Elina, what stats are you gonna pick? Personally, I think you should raise your Endurance a bit, otherwise you'll run out of Stamina way faster than us... assuming that you ever get around to actually doing anything."

[Companion Information

Name: Elina  
Titles:  
Level: 7  
Experience: 1/70  
Age: Adult  
Race: Cat-Tribe

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Rank: G  
Class: Priestess of Light  
Specialization: Healing  
Profession: Enchanter Level 3]

[Stats

Health: 25/25  
Mana: 30/30  
Stamina: 10/10  
Mana Regen per minute: 40  
Health Regen per hour: 30

Strength: 1  
Vitality: 2(+1)  
Endurance: 2  
Dexterity: 2  
Agility: 2  
Intelligence: 5(+1)  
Wisdom: 3(+1)  
Perception: 2  
Charisma: 1

Willpower: 3  
Luck: 2  
Aura: 3

Attack Power: 5  
Defense Rating: 1(+1)]

She spent twenty minutes thinking about it, but eventually decided on placing the point in Endurance, but regretted not having a second one to invest into Agility. As a Priestess, those two stats were typically considered meaningless, but that was only true for the ones who could leisurely spend their time in the temple: Healing sick and injured followers of the Goddess of Light.

Adventurers needed to be able to move around quickly, and having a gigantic mana-pool was pointless, if the sluggish healer died because he or she couldn't move fast

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enough. In the worst case scenario, they might even pass-out from fatigue, while their comrades were desperately fighting for their lives.

When she glanced at her level again, Elina's cheerful mood suddenly disappeared. She muttered "I'm sorry Big Brother... but it looks like your little sister's finally going to beat you."

Michael sighed and told her "I don't really expect you to just 'get-over' losing your family; I mean, it hasn't even been a whole day since they died. Hell, I wouldn't be surprised if it takes a while for it to actually sink it..."

She sighed and then shook her head a few times, before replying "No, I've been an adventurer for three years now..." She sniffled loudly and continued "This isn't the first time that I've lost people that I loved and cared about."

Michael gave her a warm smile, while telling her "Take off your robe... we're about to die."

## Chapter 29: Unrealistic Aspirations

When Michael first saw the ten-meter tall 'Chaotic Feline Treant, Level-49, Rank-D, Super-Elite,' he immediately stored Sarah into his second Companion-Storage slot. However, when he attempted to do the same to Elina, he received a notice: "Warning: Cannot store or summon Companions during combat."

Fortunately, he was able to send his blood-soaked rabbit-fur kilt and boots into his last two bag-slots. While completely naked, he told the depressed Priestess to take her clothes off, while being awkwardly close to her.

However, she didn't even hesitate to store her enchanted pure-white, self-cleaning, silk-robe. She still had her 'Adventurer's Guild Identification Bracelet', and a silver necklace that was basically just a thin chain, but her most valuable piece of equipment was safely placed in her only bag-slot.

Michael was gazing into her catlike, yellow eyes, as he looked past her short and matted, curly black hair with his peripheral vision. She was taller than him by a few inches, but the colossal, bright-red panther behind her was just too large for him to miss.

Elina was shivering because she could feel the ground shaking with each 'soft' step that it took, and all the hairs on her tail were sticking out. The aura of that vine-covered feline was so potent and violent, that she actually lost five points of health when it just glanced at her, with its gigantic, crystalline eyes.

He snickered and asked her "Are you a virgin?" but before she had the chance to answer, a slimy tendril, with the thickness of her arm, passed straight through her back, out the center of her chest, and then into Michael's abdomen. Her health instantly plummeted down to zero, but he was still alive for long enough to feel as if his entire body was being struck by lightning.

However, after they were both killed in less than a second of each-other. In his pitch-black wisp-form, he witnessed the panther-shaped treant retract its tentacle-like tongue, sucking both of their entire bodies into its colossal maw.

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Then it just casually prowled away, heading towards the south. Michael sighed and muttered “Must have been a random patrol, huh?”

Once it was long gone, he respawned a few meters away from the pool of blood and gore. As soon as he removed the naked cat-girl from his third Companion-slot, she yelled “Of course I am! We’re about to die, and you’re asking me about my chastity?!”

After laughing hysterically for a few moments, the naked man instantly put his filthy kilt and stained boots back on, before saying “Nah, you just lost your death-virginity.”

It was only then that she noticed the pop-up window, which stated: “Title Earned: Of the Undying Light. After losing everyone you’ve ever loved and cared about, you have experienced death together with your Companion; yet your soul is undaunted and refused to pass-on, determined to stay in this world for an eternity if necessary, to achieve your dreams. Willpower and Luck have increased by three points each.”

He sighed and grumbled “Such bullshit; I had to die seven times before I got ‘The Immortal’ title. Hell, that was number fourteen and I didn’t even get anything from it! Ugh, is it because I don’t have any aspirations or lofty goals? Well, I obviously wanna make it to ‘SSS’ and reach the the soft-cap, since there’s no max-level... It would be nice to have a set of Legendary gear, and I’d like to fuck a dragon of some sort. Wait, is that considered bestiality? Actually, is it even physically possible to have sex with non-humanoids in this world? I guess I could settle for an anthropomorphic dragoness, but I feel like these are all pretty high-class dreams, right?”

After listening to that slew of ridiculous statements and questions, Elina started giggling, as she instantly equipped her loose, white-robe. Then her smile froze as she asked “Wait, you aren’t joking... Do you have any idea how impossibly difficult any of those things are? Ah, wait, why don’t I remember dying?”

Michael snickered and told her “Well, you basically got insta-killed by a giant tentacle through the spine and heart. Anyway, of course it’ll be fucking hard. What, you think this is the first time I ever tried to farm for legendaries, grinded levels, and... Actually, I’ve never tried to have sex with a dragon before, because they didn’t really exist in the world I came from, but that’s beside the point. By the way, you lost your necklace and bracelet...”

Immediately touching her jugular notch with both hands, she sighed and muttered “It’s fine... just something my mother gave me. There were no enchantments placed on it, so it only had a bit of sentimental value.”

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He smirked and said “Ah, that sucks... If it makes you feel better, I was brought into this world completely naked. Well, anyway, it’s about time I let the little worm-girl back out.” Unlike when using his bag or prison, summoning or storing Companions didn’t require him to be in physical contact with them.

With a wave of Michael’s left hand, the leather-clad Thief suddenly appeared a few feet away from his body. She was standing then normally, and couldn’t even tell that any time had passed, yet she still complained “Can we hurry the fuck up? I wanna make it to at least level-six before we stop for the day.”

Thus, they continued ‘hunting’ where they left off. However, rather than going any farther south, they turned around and started traveling northeast.

Weaker enemies gave less experience, but it was far easier to kill the ‘Bengal Tigers’ that were only level-six for two experience-points per person, than the level-nine ones that only gave three. The best part, was that with Elina’s increased Willpower and level advantage over them, she couldn’t even be feared.

Their endurance and health was also much lower, so Michael could bash their skulls in far easier. In fact, on several occasions, Sarah would teleport onto the beast’s back, and stab both knives directly into the base of its skull, or sever its spinal cord.

With her relatively slow mana-recovery, she could only use ‘Shadow-Step’ once per minute. However, it took them ten or twenty minutes to find their prey, so there was never a situation where she couldn’t immediately stun or kill the enemy.

After Michael used telekinesis to fire a tiny pebble through the left eye-socket of the fifth tiger, he was enveloped in a bright-white light. Sarah yelled “Damn it! How the hell did you manage to get ahead of me?!”

[Player Information]

Name: Michael

Titles: The Nudist, The Noob, The Immortal, The Lurker, The Survivor

Level: 6

Experience: 0/60

Age: Adult

Race: Human

Rank: F



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Class: None  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Leatherworker Level 2]

[Stats

Health: 42.5/42.5  
Mana: 20/20  
Stamina: 20/20  
Mana Regen per minute: 30  
Health Regen per hour: 45

Strength: 6  
Vitality: 4.5  
Endurance: 4  
Dexterity: 3  
Agility: 4(+1)  
Intelligence: 4  
Wisdom: 3  
Perception: 1  
Charisma: 1

Willpower: 14  
Luck: 14  
Aura: 1.9

Attack Power: 30  
Defense Rating: 2(+2)]

Michael snickered as he decided to just increase his Strength by two points, since he typically ended up just using brute force to fight anyway. Then he told the Goblin-girl, “Calm down, we only need to slaughter three more kitty-cats and you’ll... Ah, what the fuck?! No way...”

After he stored the tiger-carcass, there was a small black object laying on the ground. Elina was the first to run over and pick it up, while using her ‘Scan’ ability, to read “Obsidian Ring: Grants the user two points of Perception and increases their training

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speed of the Darkness Affinity by ten-percent. Soulbound to Sarah Carelia, and can only be worn by her. Rare Quality, requires level-five.”

She immediately handed it to the blind-girl, and said “It appears that the Goddess of Darkness really favors you.” The Thief held it in her hands for a moment, before putting it on her right ring-finger.

Suddenly, a wave of darkness surrounded her body, and then her pure-white eyes turned pitch-black: as if they were giant pupils. Sarah shouted “Holy shit! I can actually see! Wait, what the fuck... I thought you were Human, so you were a Warbeast? Well, whatever, there isn’t really much of a difference anyway. I pretty much hate all races equally.”

Michael furrowed his brows and stared intently at Elina’s chest, until she finally asked “Is there a problem with my breasts?” while smirking.

He sighed and said “Nah, your tits are fine, but I was trying to ‘Scan’ your robe... Since I can’t get it to work, that must be a Rare piece, right? Hmmm, so can items just randomly drop off of magical-beasts? I kinda assumed that you were just wearing normal cloth, which you enchanted a bit.”

She giggled and then explained “There are two kinds of items in this world: those that are created by mortals, and those that are bestowed upon us by the Goddesses. The differences between them are-”

Michael quickly interrupted “Yeah-yeah, I get the point already. Conventional and Soulbound, the former is made by humanoids and the latter comes from the syst-er Goddesses. Hmmm~, this is really convenient...”

## Chapter 30: Hunting an Elite

Michael muttered “Unlike most RPGs I’ve played, the drops seem to be tailor-made, specifically for the people who are farming them. I wonder if it has to do with the last or first hit? Nah, probably just randomly picks one of the people in the party... Most likely based on the Luck stat.”

Then he asked Elina “In a large group of adventurers, do the chances of items appearing increase?”

She angrily bit her lip and mumbled “Yes, they do... Didn’t anyone ever tell you it was rude to interrupt people?”

Ignoring her, he continued to talk to himself: “Sweet, so it’s a combined effect, huh? That makes sense, ‘cause Sarah’s Luck is currently the shittiest out of the three of us. However, if we add mine and Elina’s, that’s a whole twenty-two points... If Inari wasn’t so exhausted, I could bring her out and increase our drop-chances a bit more.”

Then the vigilant Thief suddenly yelled “Enemy!” With her ‘normal’ vision returned, she also improved her mana-sense even farther, which made it very easy for her to notice the strange creature that was creeping-up on them.

When Michael saw it, he smirked and said “Hey, it’s time for you to finally do your job... Meow-meow~, nyan-mew~?”

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Upon hearing those extremely offensive remarks, to Cat-Tribe, Elina glared at him with her bright-yellow irises radiating a blinding light. Then she asked “Are you sure you wanna fight that thing? It’s pretty slow, so we should be able to escape, but without a fire-mage, I don’t really see how you’re planning to kill it.”

He snickered, as he stared at the “Natural Ursus Treant, Level-7, Rank-E, Elite.” It had a ridiculous three-hundred health-points, while in the shape of a large, bio-luminescent, green bear; the total height was over four-meters, and unlike a normal animal, it was entirely made out of bark and vines.

Sarah complained “Where hell do we attack something like that?” as she glared at the giant creature, which was even standing on its hind-legs.

Michael yelled “Don’t worry brat, I’ll Tank it; just keep moving around and stabbing at it!” before taking out a miscellaneous, mossy, smooth-stone. Then he snarled at the bear while roaring “Oi, look at me you ugly piece of shit! I’m gonna fucking tear your grassy-dick off!” while channeling mana into his voice, and creating the skill ‘Taunt’ while pitching that rock as hard as he could.

The treant lacked reproductive organs, but the spell was still extremely effective, because he managed to shatter the creature’s left, bright-blue, crystalline eye. It’s health quickly dropped down to 278/300, and it became ‘enraged.’

After that, Sarah teleported onto the back of the treant’s neck, and started furiously stabbing her rusty daggers into the various vines and relatively soft spots. With every prick, a small ‘-3’ or ‘-2’ would appear, but the elemental-beast didn’t seem to mind her attacks.

However, it let out a rage-filled growl as it fell to all fours and began charging towards Michael. He immediately pulled out a second stone and tried to pitch it into the monster’s right eye, but the bear was able to turn its head slightly, causing the rock to miss.

He yelled “I thought you said that this bastard was slow?!” as he jumped to the left, rolling across the ground, and standing back up again, while removing a handful of pebbles from his inventory. Then he used a combination of physical strength and telekinesis, to fire them like buckshot, striking the elemental-beast’s torso six times: ‘-1,’ ‘-2,’ ‘-.4,’ ‘-.8,’ ‘-3,’ ‘-1,’ and ‘-2’ appeared in quick succession.

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Sarah had jumped off of the creature's neck after it started charging, so she was still waiting for her mana to regenerate, before she could land another flurry. Elina shouted "Michael, look out!" as dozens of thorny vines emerged from beneath the man's feet.

All magical creatures could obviously cast spells, and the more powerful they were, the more complicated their abilities could be. The snake-like plants slithered up his legs, dealing minuscule amounts of damage, but the real problem was that it was a 'crowd-control' technique.

Michael yelled "Get ready to heal me!" as the bright-green bear turned towards him and roared loudly. Even though he couldn't move his legs because of the 'rooted' debuff, he didn't stop pulling out smooth-stones and throwing them at the monster's face, while cursing "What the fuck are you waiting for, asshole!?"

His mana was at 15/20 from using telekinesis, so he couldn't afford to keep using the actual 'taunt' spell. However, simply pelting the beast with rocks was enough to maintain its 'aggro' and keep it from paying attention to the two girls.

Elina started chanting, while clasping both of her hands together and closing her eyes: "Great Goddess of Light, please bless this man with your divine protection..." A golden halo appeared above her head, and then a shower of warm light began falling upon Michael's body.

He laughed hysterically as his health began regenerating rapidly, but when the treant swiped its left paw, his right arm was instantly torn out of the socket. As he screamed "Fuck, shit, cunt, ah! Heal harder please!" the radiance intensified; while the missing limb didn't recover, the bleeding did stop.

As the bear was about directly devour his head, he held a smooth-stone in his left hand, and slammed it into the creature's only remaining crystalline-eye. The orb was shattered into a thousand pieces, and some of them flew into Michael's face and neck, but didn't deal much damage.

Fortunately, it was at that time when his 'rooted' debuff disappeared, and he was able to forcefully remove the thorny-vines from his legs, before dodging the blinded monster's attack. Sarah suddenly appeared on its back, and began slicing apart the squishiest spots that she could find.

Each of her seeming insignificant strikes dealt three to five damage, but the bear's total health was down to 167/300. However, that's when it grunted a few times and then

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calmly stood there, causing Michael to yell “Shitballs! Damn it, the bastard can heal itself! Ugh, this is why I hate these fucking plant-whores!”

Every second, a huge ‘+15’ or ‘+25’ would appear above its head, and no matter how many vines the little Thief slashed apart, they swiftly reattached themselves or new ones simply grew. One of her daggers actually shattered, so she had to pull out a replacement from her hip.

Unlike Michael, she couldn’t actually see a health-bar, and could only continue to attack without realizing that it was pointless. The one-armed man calmly walked around the bear-shaped treant, carefully examining its exterior.

Elina finally opened her eyes again and yelled “We should run away now, while we still have the chance! If we had a fire, chaos or ice mage here, things would be different, but how do you expect to hurt something like that?! Wa-what are you doing!?”

Even Sarah stopped what she was doing to stare at that absurd scene, as Michael struggled to use his right foot and left hand to widen the mysterious hole below the creature’s fuzzy tail. He started snickered and then shouted “What the fuck are you just standing there for?! It’s not an actual bear, the inside’s almost completely hollow! Hurry up damn it! Crawl into this bastard’s ass-hole, and attack it from the inside!”

She hesitated for a moment but then said “Fine...” as she jumped down to him and swiftly dove into the relatively small entrance into the treant’s body. The moment she attacked something that looked like a giant, throbbing, vine-infested heart, a huge ‘-45’ appeared in bright-red above the monster’s head.

Then it stopped regenerating and flipped over onto its back, curling up and trying to grab at Michael. He immediately pushed off of the beast and rolled across the moist dirt and various types of jungle-foliage.

Another large ‘-35’ appeared above the bear’s head, as it rolled onto its stomach and charged towards the only enemy that it could think about. The one-armed man was covered in soil and blood, as he roared “Yea, come at me bitch!”

He didn’t even bother throwing stones anymore, since they barely did any damage anyway. A massive ‘-24’ appeared, as Michael was rammed by incredibly hard snout, launching him into a huge tree, and dropping his health down to 12/45.

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However, Elina completely skipped the chant and just yelled “Flash-Heal!” as she raised her right hand into the air, causing a beam of light to fly into the sky, then come down from beyond the jungle-canopy. A golden number suddenly flashed before his eyes, because the spell critically healed him for fifty points.

Unfortunately, the bear used both of its huge paws to pin him against the tree, roaring furiously as it was about to chomp down on his head. Normally, Michael wouldn’t really mind dying too much, but he was afraid that the drop-chances would be ruined; it was also possible that the two Companions would be forcefully recalled, and Sarah wouldn’t be able to finish the ‘Elite’ off.

The enraged Thief screamed “Just fucking die already!” as she plunged the two blades into the heart and channeled all of her malice, in the form of pitch-black mana, into the treant’s core. Suddenly, a screen appeared and told her “You have learned the spell Hate-Strike.” accompanied by a black ‘-75,’ the next second there was another ‘-90.’

## Chapter 31: A ‘Divine’ Weapon

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The moment that it died, Michael shoved the giant bear-shaped treant into his fifteenth bag-slot. When the elemental-beast vanished, a brightly-glowing, Bloodworm-Goblin quickly fell to her knees while panting loudly.

Each of them received fourteen experience for killing the level-seven, rank-E, Elite. Sarah started laughing maniacally, before shouting “Yes! Hahaha, I’ve finally leveled-up! Wow, I even managed to increase my Darkness Affinity!”

Elina ran over to them and yelled “I can’t believe you guys actually did that! I’ve definitely never heard of anyone killing a treant that way before... but more importantly, the two of you managed to defeat an ‘Elite’ that was not-only higher level than you, but also a higher rank! It’s even stranger that Michael was just throwing rocks at it the whole time!”

She was a lot more excited about the victory, than the two people who did most of the work. The one-armed Human suddenly started laughing hysterically, as he pulled out a small green bead and asked “I wonder if I’ll turn into a giant tree-bear-man?”

Seeing what he was about to do, the frantic Priestess shouted “No, stop it!” but Michael completely ignored her.

Unfortunately, a barrier appeared, followed by a notification: “Warning: Players must be at least level-ten before evolving to rank-E.”

Which caused him to curse “For fuck’s sake! Damn it, this is such bullshit!” before grabbing the falling mana-core and storing it back into his fifteenth bag-slot.

Then Elina scolded “How could you just arbitrarily forsake your humanity like that? What good is being immortal if you get transformed into some kind of monster? Do you plan on living in the wilderness forever?”

He snickered and told her “Calm down~, besides, what’s wrong with being a badass tree-man? Well, it would suck if my sex-drive disappeared, but I guess I wouldn’t have to masturbate as much... There are pros and cons to everything.”

Sarah grumbled “Both of you shut the fuck up for a second and help me decide on what to use my stat-points on.” as she stared intently at her status-screen.



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Michael immediately said “Your mana-situation is pretty shitty at the moment, so put one into Wisdom and the other into Intelligence.” Without waiting for Elina’s opinion, she listened to his advice.

[Companion Information

Name: Sarah  
Titles: The Tree-Hater  
Level: 6  
Experience: 8/60  
Age: Adult  
Race: Bloodworm-Goblin  
Rank: F  
Class: Thief  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

Health: 30/30  
Mana: 15/15  
Stamina: 15/15

Mana Regen per minute: 20  
Health Regen per hour: 30  
Strength: 2  
Vitality: 3  
Endurance: 3  
Dexterity: 3  
Agility: 5  
Intelligence: 3  
Wisdom: 2  
Perception: 2(+2)  
Charisma: 2

Willpower: 5  
Luck: 3  
Aura: 1.5

Attack Rating: 5(+11.5)

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Defense Rating: 1.5(+1)]

[Passives

Immune System Boost Level 5: Resists Level five infectious diseases and illnesses.

Superior Regeneration Level 1: Organs and bones that have been lost, can be completely regenerated. Recovery speed is dependent on the amount of mana consumed.

Cutaneous Respiration Level 1: Able to absorb oxygen through the skin, as long as it's properly hydrated. Effectiveness is dependent on Vitality.

Darkness Affinity Level 3: Dark environments increase the speed of health and mana recovery. Increases damage to enemies with Light Affinity by 30%.

Dagger Mastery Level 3: Increases Attack Rating while wielding knives, short-swords, and daggers by 15%.]

[Spellbook

Shadow-Step Level 3: Teleports into the target's shadow. Range is dependent on Agility. Costs ten mana-points to activate.

Shadow-Cloak Level 2: Creates a shroud of darkness around the caster and all allies within range. Range is dependent on the Aura stat. Costs one mana-point per second.

Hate-Strike Level 1: Channels Dark-Mana into the caster's weapons, polluting the enemy's body and soul with destructive energy. Damage is dependent on the Aura stat. Twice as effective on enemies of the Light affinity. Costs five mana per second.]

Michael started laughing hysterically, and said "That fucking title... congrats?" Neither he, nor Sarah truly understood how difficult it normally was for adventurers to level-up, gain achievements, or reach higher ranks.

In fact, just killing an Elite usually required an incredibly powerful team of five, and sometimes a small army of relatively weak humanoids. Elves were an exception, since

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they had plenty of time to safely train for dozens or hundreds of years before ever facing any kind of danger.

Elina stared at the two of them while reminiscing about the terrible battle, where nearly her entire clan of five-hundred was wiped out, trying to defend themselves against a rank-E, level-ten 'Boss.' In the end, herself and her siblings were among the few lucky survivors, and each managed to acquire 'Rare' soulbound equipment.

Of course, the power of that miscellaneous treant, and the monster that nearly annihilated a small army of veteran Cat-Tribe adventurers, were in completely different realms. However, she had still never seen someone crazy enough to crawl inside of an enemy and attack them from the inside.

While she was lost in her thoughts, Michael said "Meow-Meow, move your fucking foot." He was crouching down in-front of the Priestess and trying to grab at something that she was standing on.

After she hissed at him, he simply pushed her out of the way with the top of his head, and picked up the strange object. When he tried to 'Scan' it, a message popped up: "Unidentifiable Glass Ball."

However, Elina snatched it out of his hand, then smirked and told him "If you promise to stop being so rude to me, I'll tell you what this is..."

Unfortunately for her, the moment she used her 'Scan' spell on it, he was able to identify it as well. The one-armed man grabbed the fist-sized, clear, crystalline sphere, and read "Arcane Orb: Increases user's Intelligence by two and Attack Rating by ten; deals Arcane damage upon contact with enemies. Soulbound to Michael, and can only be utilized by him. Rare Quality, requires level-five."

Sarah walked over and asked "What the hell is that thing?" while tossing her two broken daggers onto the ground.

The priestess tilted her head and muttered "Arcane-Mages use wands and staves, just like any other class specializing in magical attacks. This 'weapon' is weird though... I've heard of Arcane-Warriors who can use strange flying swords, and Archers that can guide their arrows over a great distance, but this thing..."

Michael channeled a very minuscule amount of mana into the orb, and it began glowing in myriad of colors: like a prism. Then he immediately threw it at the cat-girl's forehead,

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causing zero damage, but creating a loud thumping noise, and making her fall backwards onto the ground.

He quickly caught the rebounding sphere and then used 'Telekinesis' to make it float above his left palm. Elina yelled "What's wrong with you?!" as she hurriedly stood back up, and glared at him.

However, he just sighed dramatically and grumbled "So basically, I could have gotten a badass katana, or some sort of OP magical staff... Yet, the Arcane 'Goddess' decided that a fucking rubber-ball was more my style?"

Sarah was laughing hysterically at the freckled woman, while also ridiculing the divine 'weapon' that Michael received. He muttered to himself "Well, at least this is probably better than using rocks and stones... Hmmm, so that's how it is then? Is it a Class-specific thing, or maybe it's based on the gear that the person was using when the monster died?"

"Actually, it's almost as if there was actually someone, or something, monitoring us... I mean, Worm-Girl coincidentally gets a hardcore perception ring, when she's blind and constantly bitching about leveling-up so that she could see again. On the other hand, I've been spending most of my time throwing shit, and have also been complaining about how I wanted a weapon."

Elina was still angry, but she took a deep breath and managed to calm herself, before telling him "The Goddesses are always watching us. They would obviously know exactly what we need, and bestow upon us divine artifacts that were specifically created for our own personal use. When we die, our Soulbound equipment stays with us, and disappears from this world along with our souls. Such items cannot be stolen, given away, lost, or destroyed... Strangely enough, they can be sold, but only directly to the Goddesses themselves. There's no reason to ever do that though; most veteran adventurers, who manage to find better weapons or armor, would simply keep them in their homes. Why would anyone sell divine artifacts for a few coins anyway?"

As she was talking, a level-six 'Bengal Tiger' roared at them and rapidly approached. Michael yelled "Shut up ya damn cat!" and the Priestess actually started crying. It was impossible for him to influence her with his 'Intimidation,' but his target was behind her body. Then he looked at the girl and said "Not you, for fuck's sake, are you deaf? Maybe you've just gotten so used to hearing these bastards, that you just completely tune them out... Actually, what's up with that? In the world I came from, there were

literally only about three thousand; that was on the entire planet. Yet, in this little patch of jungle, these assholes are like cockroaches!”

## Chapter 32: Does a Cat-Girl Defecate in the Jungle?

Before Sarah even had the chance to teleport, Michael pitched the one-pound ‘Arcane Orb’ with his left hand, as hard as he could. He didn’t bother using any telekinesis, since he wanted to see how much damage the little ‘rubber-ball’ would do on its own.

His aim was surprisingly accurate, considering that he was mostly right-handed. The glowing sphere smacked into the tiger’s snout, bouncing high into the air, before changing its trajectory and returning to his palm.

A big ‘-40’ appeared above its head, but there was no physical reaction. It wasn’t a critical hit, but still much more powerful than throwing a rock, yet the beast didn’t even seem to notice the attack.

After that, he threw the ball once again, smacking into the tiger’s left foreleg, and bouncing off. The blow did the same exact amount of damage, and the creature’s health had reached zero, but there were no physical injuries: It simply died.

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Whether from a heart-attack, stroke, or having its central nervous-system obliterated, the animal stopped running towards him and just slid across the ground for a few moments, before slumping down. Michael turned to the still-crying cat-girl and asked “What the fuck was that?”

Elina wiped away her tears, with her robe’s sleeves, and answered “Arcane magic deals damage directly to a person or beast’s life-force. There are some stunning techniques and other things like that, but the reason that people fear it so much, is because you don’t even know you’re dying. Anyway, can we please go find a place to rest now?”

The little Thief complained “No way, I just leveled-up! What the hell am I supposed to do while you assholes are sleeping? I’ll just go kill things on my-” Before she could finish her sentence, Michael instantly stored her into Companion-slot two.

He turned to the tired Priestess and told her “Yeah, I need to get some sleep as well, or this damn arm won’t grow back.” as he walked over to the tiger carcass and shoved it into his bag.

After that, the two of them traveled to the east for two hours before finally returning to that same waterfall. It wasn’t a coincidence, since they had a map and decided that it would be much faster to just return there, than trying to find another place like that.

Along the way, they managed to avoid the relatively low-leveled magical-beasts that would have been willing to attack them, and even took a short break to eat some wild blueberries that they found. However, when they finally arrived, Elina was very fidgety and told the one-armed man “I need you to protect me... while I take care of something.”

Michael sighed and grumbled “Ah yes, the famous cat-girl shitting in the jungle scene... I wonder why they always leave this part out of all the stories?” as he had to stand-guard a few feet away from the groaning Priestess.

She was completely naked, squatting next to a huge tree, several-hundred meters away from the waterfall. Elina complained “Stop looking at me... Ow~, remind me never to eat blueberries again.”

However, Michael just kept staring at her, while coughing and gagging occasionally. He asked “What else am I supposed to do? I fucking told you that we’d probably get diarrhea, but no~, you needed some damn fruit. Sigh, if we actually had toilets and...

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Oh God, I just remembered that we don't have toilet-paper. Actually, does that even exist in this world?"

The scowling cat-girl yelled "Of course it does! 'Normally,' adventurers would bring plenty of it along with them... but someone left my backpack in that inn!"

He sighed dramatically, then told her "Well~, I might have a solution... It'll be really gross though. Kinda have to wait till you're done first, so shit faster." No matter how long she had spent as an adventurer, even her brother and sister had never been as rude and overbearing as that strange Human.

It was the first day that the two of them spent together, yet Michael acted as if he had known Elina for years. When she was finally finished, he walked over to the squatting Priestess, while holding his breath.

Then he stored the 'Arcane Orb' into his last bag-slot, and lowered his only hand towards her right shoulder. She yelled "What are you doing?!" as he channeled mana through her body, and utilized the 'Telekinesis' spell in an unusual way.

Targeting only the fecal-matter attached to her skin, he released the skill, and she yelped, while jumping up. Michael coughed and said "Heh, now come-on, let's get the hell away from here so I can breathe again."

Elina glared at him, as she immediately put her robe back on, then began briskly walking towards the waterfall in the distance. When they finally arrived, he summoned Inari onto the soft soil, a few meters away from the riverbank.

Since he had filled all of his bag-space, Michael decided to remove all of the small rocks and smooth-stones that he had left. Once the two spots were finally opened up, he didn't store his boots and kilt, because they were absolutely filthy.

Not just dirt and blood, but moss, sap, and other substances had been smeared all over those three pieces of equipment. There was also a decent amount of damage as well, so he made the easy decision to simply throw it away with the rocks and stones.

The naked cat-girl was already swimming in the slowly running waters, as she yelled "Hurry up and give me some soap!" She was extremely exhausted and wanted to go to sleep as soon as possible.

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Michael unhurriedly waded through the river as he approached the floating Priestess, dropping an orange bar onto her chest, and saying “I honestly don’t know how you can shit in-front of other people... Hell, I can’t even go in a public bathroom. By any chance, is exhibitionism one of the Goddess of Light’s holy doctrines?”

After hearing that, Elina asked him “Why are you treating me like this?! It’s like you’re purposefully trying to make me angry! What did I do to you?!”

He snickered and calmly answered “Oh, how was I supposed to be treating you? Heh, we’ve only known each-other for a day... This is just how I am. Not really sure what you expected from an immortal asshole, but I am who I am. I hate lying, I can’t stand being dirty, I normally masturbate at least a few times a day, I swear constantly, and most people say I’m fucking crazy... but in a world like this, I’m probably not quite as strange.”

She retorted “No, you’re probably even stranger in this one.” Then let out a long drawn-out sigh, the cat-girl began using the bar of soap to slowly scrub her body, while staring up at the bright sky, beyond the jungle canopy.

After a few seconds of awkward silence, Elina turned her head towards him and bit her lip, before saying “I know, we just met, and to be completely honest, I feel oddly comfortable around you. Hehe~, after all, I never had any friends in the Convent, and even my own siblings used to think I was a weirdo. You’ve probably never heard about this before, since very few people actually believe in such a thing... but you aren’t the first person to come here from another world.”

Michael smirked and asked her “I kinda figured that; I mean, isn’t this planet a little big to be created just for me? Hmmm, how much do you know about the others?” as he used a bar of orange soap to viciously scrub the blood-stains off of his skin.

The Priestess giggled, then told him “It’s not really a secret or anything like that. Long ago, there was supposedly a time when only regular animals roamed this world. In that era, only one person existed, and her name was... Arcana.

“However, even though she was omnipotent and immortal, she was lonely on her own. Thus, she decided to create two daughters, Lux and Umbra. To create the beautiful, kind and warm Goddess of Light, a cruel, ruthless and cold shadow was cast onto the world. The First Goddess treated both of her children equally, but it was only a matter of time before their small family became larger.



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“Darkness spawned Chaos, while my Goddess used her amazing powers to give birth to Naturae. That’s when things started to get a little... sketchy. Well, let’s just say, the unofficial texts all say that the Goddesses of Nature and Chaos literally had sex with and impregnated each-other. While many of the less controversial scriptures state that the two of them had a great battle, and during the conflict, Terra, Ignis, Aqua and Aeris came into existence.

“Eventually, the nine of them became bored, and decided to play a game... That was when magical-beasts first appeared. They were created for the sole purpose of entertaining the Goddesses. However, it wasn’t enough for them to be satisfied; they needed people to truly hold their interests. Do you see where I’m going with this?”

Michael snickered and said “Of course, I kinda figured it out from the very beginning, but didn’t wanna interrupt your story. Also, I was enjoying the show... how long are you gonna scrub your pussy anyway? Ah, sorry, that word is probably really offensive to cat-girls huh?”

Elina glared at him and retorted “It’s offensive to all women, and aren’t you doing the same thing?” as she stopped floating on her back and stood up-right in the waist-deep, crystal-clear water.

He started laughing awkwardly, then asked “Wait, you were masturbating too?”

## Chapter 33: The World Is Uncensored

Elina yelled “Of course I wasn’t! How can you so causally touch-yourself like that in-front of a Priestess of Light?!” as her face started turning red from anger, more-so than embarrassment.

Michael snickered and said “Oh come on; how can an innocent Priestess so casually piss and shit in-front of a man she’s only known for a day? Sigh, fine, I’ll just wait till you’re asleep. Anyway, so basically, the Goddesses summoned loads of Human Players into this world back in the day. Somewhere along the line, they ended up creating a bunch of different races because of the whole evolution thing, and then they all eventually quit. They probably all got tired of dying, or watching all their loved-ones disappearing. Well, either that, or the Goddesses just got bored with it all, and decided to take away their immortality.”

She sighed and told him “Yes, that’s essentially what happened. Now if you don’t mind, I’m going to get some rest; it’s been a long day, and I’m sure you’re more interested in staring at my body, than actually listening to anything I say...” as she started walking towards the riverbank. Then she turned around and handed him the bar of soap that she had been using, while winking at him.

As she walked away, he muttered “Hmmm, friendship with the perverted cat-girl Priestess seems to have increased somehow? It’d be nice if it was like a game, where relationships could be quantified like that... or not, maybe that part is better kept ‘realistic,’ huh?”

While she was trying pick-out a spot to lay down on, while casting an ‘Illumination’ spell to dry her body off, Michael approached behind her and said “Here, there’s no point in taking a bath if you’re just gonna lay down in the dirt afterwards.” In his only hand appeared a huge ‘Sabertooth Cougar’ pelt, which was completely clean and in pristine condition.

Elina just stared at it blankly for a while, before he told her “Seriously, I only have one fucking arm; are you gonna take it or what?” as he handed the folded-up fur to her.

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Then she asked “Is this the only one? I really don’t think it’s a good idea for the two of us to sleep on the same pelt... especially when you’re like that.”

Michael snickered and replied “Sorry, but I wasn’t trying to sleep with you.” as he made a level-six ‘Bengal Tiger’ pelt appear in his hand.

Witnessing that, the curious cat-girl said “When did you have time to skin and tan that? What the... It say’s that it was created five seconds ago! Is this another one of your divine gifts?”

He sighed and explained “Kinda, it’s just a crafting system; I can instantly transform the full body of an animal or magical-beast, into a pristine pelt. Hehe, even if they were missing their head before that, it’s somehow reformed in the process. Anyway, you’re an Enchanter, right? How does that normally work?”

The Priestess bent over and began carefully placing her cougar-fur down, then as she took the tiger pelt from him, she said “Well, it isn’t particularly difficult. One way is free, but takes a long time, and the other is really expensive, but also takes forever.” After placing down the second ‘bed,’ right next to the first one, she continued “Enchanting an item is basically just channeling excessive amounts of mana into it, while concentrating on the specific properties that you want to endow.”

As her silken, white-robe suddenly covered her body, she smiled and told him “In order to make sure that this magnificent divine artifact never becomes soiled, I imbued it with ‘Eternal Cleanliness.’ It was a level-two enchantment, which required me to meditate almost nonstop, for a whole week. The total amount of mana was at least four-hundred thousand.”

Michael immediately shouted “Holy shit!” before asking “How the fuck is your Willpower so damn low then?”

At that question she bit her lip nervously, and turned her face away from him, while admitting “Okay, it would have taken me a week, but I kept getting distracted by... some things, and so I ended up needing a whole month. It was a difficult time in my life, and I really don’t want to talk about it.” After sitting down onto the cougar-pelt, she continued “Anyway, the second method is a lot less work, but much more costly.”

Once he laid down onto the tiger-fur, she stared intently at a certain part of his body that was still standing-up, and asked “Isn’t that uncomfortable? Actually, why aren’t you

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embarrassed? Did the people in your world normally walk around naked all the time, and casually touch-themselves in-front of each-other?”

He snickered and said “Nah, well, sometimes? I don’t know, I’ve seen all kinds of crazy, disgusting and fucked-up shit happen on the internet... but in reality, not really. It’s funny but, there was a time when I seriously considered getting a job on a cam-site. Hmmm, it’s mostly just masturbating in-front of an audience, and they pay you for doing it. To be completely honest, I used to be embarrassed about my body when I had acne... That’s about it though; why should I be ashamed of myself now? I’m in the best shape of my life, my skin is clear, my dick looks normal...”

However, Elina interjected “No, I’ve definitely never seen one that looks like that before. Ah, I mean, what, no, um, as an adventurer I’ve obviously been in situations where-”

Michael started laughing hysterically and told her “Calm down, I’m not gonna judge you. It’s cute how you think I actually care about your history of voyeurism.” Then asked “Anyway, do you mean that circumcision doesn’t exist in this world, or are Cat-Tribe penises really tiny and covered in spines?”

She giggled and shook her head back and forth, then she laid down on her side and said “No, they’re just usually covered in skin around the end. I’m not saying that yours looks bad, but it’s just different... Ah, before I forget; the second method of Enchanting, requires mana-cores. Since my affinity is Light, I can only create those kinds of enchantments. If I had a Darkness-type mana-core though, it would be possible to create a cloak that would allow the user to hide in the shadows. The problem is that you still have to channel your own mana through the bead, and into the item.”

Then she closed her eyes and muttered “I’m going to sleep now... Goodnight Michael, and thank you for saving me.” Her curly black hair was mostly covering her freckled face, as she used the giant cougar-head as a pillow.

The one-armed man smiled warmly, and whispered “Oyasumi nasai, little nekomimi.” while staring up at the relatively thick canopy and then utilizing his wisp-form to fully examine Elina’s body. He did notice something odd though; compared to earlier in the day, she had definitely become skinnier.

It was the result of doubling her endurance, but a lot of the excess fat on her belly, hips and thighs had thinned down. Michael muttered “Her muscles are a bit more defined too... Actually, I’m the same way. Before coming into this world, my abs had never been this tight. My arms haven’t gotten any bigger though. Well, whatever, I wish I

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could let the worm-girl out, but she'd probably wander off into the jungle and die. Sigh, there's just something about that slimy red skin and ridiculously small stature that really turns me on... Hmmm, I only have three Companion-slots left, but I wonder what I should fill them with? Ugh, it would be so cliché if I ended up having a harem of beautiful women... I should probably just focus on magical-beasts."

As he was contemplating his uncertain future, and masturbating to the Priestess who was pretending to be asleep, great upheaval was taking place all over the planet. No one understood why, but after slumbering quietly for eons, 'World Bosses' of every elemental-affinity began awakening.

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## Arc 4: In The Jungle, Dying Is the Easy part

## Chapter 34: Companions Have Quests Too

Beginning with a massive earthquake, to the south of Ariel's Meadow, the ancient bone-dragon 'Wormwood' rose from its colossal crypt. On that Moonless night, the Goddess of Darkness was the first to make her move.

In less than twelve hours, her legions of undead traveled in a straight line, passing through Carrabelle Plains, spreading disease, pestilence and wanton desolation upon the entire zone. They weren't moving aimlessly though, but aiming towards the colossal Archean Bridge.

Carrabelle City was completely devoured, as the bone-dragon swarm flew above. The High-Priestess of Light, and her army of Paladins were completely powerless to protect the town; the most powerful among them was only at level-nineteen and rank-E after-all.

The Elven Enclave managed to evacuate via their private teleportation gateway, which they deactivated afterwards. However, there were only a handful of Elves, so everyone else was forced to flee in other ways.

Powerful adventurers banded together and escaped into the Archean River or towards the northeast. However, very few actually had time to make it far enough away, before the deadly pitch-black fog enveloped them.

Overall, the humanoid casualties throughout Carrabelle Plains were well over three-hundred thousand. Yet, that was merely the beginning; their true target were the most densely populated lands in the whole world: The Goblin Empire.

There were a total of fifteen zones in all, so even the swarms of colossal bone-dragons couldn't cover all that land within a single night. Seven-million square miles, and seventy-five countries, with at least six-billion Goblins.

That single Empire was only able to compete with the five Human Kingdoms to the southwest, because of their ridiculous numerical advantage. Unfortunately, The Goblin Empire was actually controlled by Orcs and Ogres, because the majority of the tiny green-skinned men and women were incredibly weak.

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Even if they had excellent immune-systems... there was simply too large of a level-difference between themselves and the hordes of undead. By the end of that first long night, over twenty million people had been killed and resurrected as zombies, skeletons, or colossal abominations: That wasn't including all of the magical-beasts which were converted as well.

When morning came, the Goddess of Light awakened her own forces. Thousands of stars began falling from the heavens, crashing down upon the Human kingdom of Talion.

They were most famously known as the home of the official Assassin's Guild. Nearly every person in that country was 'tainted' by the Goddess of Darkness from birth.

When the World Boss 'Helel the Shining One' descended upon their capital city, everything within a twenty miles was consumed by an enormous nuclear explosion. The six-winged Seraphim was one of the closest beings to Lux herself; in the eyes of the devout worshipers of Light, she was known as 'Salvation' or 'Justice.'

However, that elegant and beautiful little-girl was widely recognized by another name as well: 'Rapture.' Wherever she went, two out of every three people would perish.

The strange thing about radiation from spells that carry the Light-attribute, was that only people that the caster recognized as an enemy, could be affected. Which meant that even with all of the nuclear fallout, the lucky few who weren't born with the Darkness-affinity, never became sick: while they watched their children, parents, spouses, and everyone they ever loved... die horrible, slow and agonizing deaths.

Immediately after the angelic army arrived on the planet, they all soared to the southeast, towards The Kingdom of Light, named after their Goddess: Luxia. While a small part of the super-continent of Arcanus was being corrupted and purged, there were plenty of places like 'Raphael's Jungle' that were completely undisturbed.

At least that's how it appeared on the surface...

After Michael had finally managed to fall asleep, laying on his left side and facing the snoring Priestess, she suddenly opened her eyes and had a serious expression. Her stamina was certainly very low when they reached the waterfall, but after bathing in the sunlight for over an hour, while calmly meditating, she was fully recovered.



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Once she stood up, the freckled cat-girl glared at the unconscious Human with her normally yellow irises glowing with a bright golden luster. She smirked at him and whispered “Thank you for the immortality, but unlike you and that disgusting little monster, I have a mission to accomplish...”

The moment that she disappeared into the jungle, a leather-clad worm-girl suddenly appeared out of thin-air. She looked down with disgust at Michael, who was completely naked, and then saw a strange notification that popped up in-front of her: “New Quest: Your Companion Elina is acting suspiciously. Follow her covertly and uncover her secrets. Reward: Two silver coins and forty experience points.”

A truly disturbing grin emerged on her face, showing all over her tiny, fang-like teeth. Before she left however, Sarah crouched down next to the sleeping, one-armed man and whispered “Thanks for the immortality asshole, but I still fucking hate you.”

Then the girl suck out her surprisingly long, pitch-black tongue, and started slobbering all over his neck, cheek and ear: leaving a clear, glue-like substance in his relatively short beard-hair. She rubbed her slimy fingers and tail across the majority of his body, and then left while snickering.

What Sarah didn’t know, was that it was impossible to molest someone like that... unless they were awake and wanted it to happen. Michael muttered “Seriously, that fucking brat; ugh, now I’m gonna have to masturbate again. Shit, my porn’s gone...”

After an hour, right at the worst possible moment, he felt horrible, agonizing pain, coursing down his spine and a large ‘-20’ appeared above his head. Then he received a notification: “Inari has died; respawning directly into Companion Storage, now.”

Before he had the chance to realize what was happening, he felt a tingling sensation throughout his whole body and was immediately forced into his wisp-form. He carefully observed the fox carcass, and his own rigid corpse for a few minutes before noticing the problem.

The vixen’s body suddenly began dissolving rapidly and transformed into a large, crystal-clear blob of mucus, which had a relatively large blue mana-core floating around within it. Above the creature’s head was the name “Slime Fox, Level-5, Rank-F.”

Michael grumbled “Figures... one of the most annoying creatures in any RPG.” as his corpse suddenly transformed into a slightly different monster. However, after they

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oriented themselves, the two doppelgangers suddenly transformed from globs of liquid, into forms that were relatively similar to the prey that they had just used to evolve.

If all he had was rocks, he wouldn't have even considered fighting against such troublesome enemies; fortunately, his Arcane Orb was extremely effective against such opponents. When he spawned a dozen meters away from the pseudo fox and Human duo, a glowing crystal-ball appeared in his right hand.

Before the two even had a chance to react, he pitched the sphere at the slime-man's head. The attack only did forty damage, but the fragile monster only had 25/35 before being hit.

A '+10 Exp' appeared, and then the humanoid form slowly started dissolving. Michael grabbed the rebounding Arcane Orb, and telekinetically fired it into the unprepared gelatinous triple-tailed fox.

It was another instant-kill, which rewarded him with another ten experience points. As he caught the surprisingly slime-less ball, the naked man sighed and then complained "Just having a single rare weapon makes such a ridiculous difference. Although, it kinda feels like the hardcore difficulty goes both ways. If there was some kinda death-penalty, I would be fucked: and not in a good way."

Instead of walking over to the puddles of goop, Michael summoned the resurrected and completely refreshed Inari. The moment that the tri-tailed vixen materialized, she saw the bright-blue mana-cores laying on the ground and sprinted towards the closest one.

After devouring it, she ran over to the other one and slurped it up as well. Between the two of them, she had received a total of one Aura, and two Perception points.

Then she began licking the puddles of slime that were simply laying there, unable to be absorbed by the soil. Michael suddenly pulled a bright-green bead out of his inventory, and asked "Inari, do you wanna gain your first Elemental Affinity?"

Hearing her name being called, the fox instantly turned to face the smiling man, but her gaze automatically locked onto his left palm. She stood on both of her hind legs and whimpered a few times, before he tossed the mana-core towards her open mouth.

As soon as Inari swallowed the tiny crystal, her body began to rapidly transform. The first change was her eyes glowing with an azure radiance, and then all of the vixen's fur started turning a bio-luminescent green.

All three tails twirled together once, before splitting into four separate, bushy, viridian vine and bright-blue colored, flower-covered fox-tails. Then her growth began, from the size of a dog, until she was closer to an adult black-bear.

However, Inari was still a child, and thus lacked the ridiculous proportions of that giant grizzly-shaped treant, from which the tiny-bead was derived. After her swift transformation had ended, Michael received a notification: “You have successfully evolved Inari into a Quad-Tailed Nature-Fox. Base stats have increased based on your luck and the ‘Natural Ursus Treant’ that the mana--core originally belonged to: Aura +3, Vitality +2, Strength +2, Endurance +2.”

## Chapter 35: The Key to Victory

[Companion Information

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Name: Inari  
Titles: The Feeder  
Level: 3  
Experience: 2/30  
Age: Child  
Race: Quad-Tailed Nature-Fox  
Rank: E  
Class: None  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

Health: 20/40  
Mana: 10/10  
Stamina: 10/20  
Mana Regen per minute: 10  
Health Regen per hour: 40  
Strength: 4.5  
Vitality: 4  
Endurance: 4  
Dexterity: 1  
Agility: 4  
Intelligence: 2  
Wisdom: 1  
Perception: 4  
Charisma: 1

Willpower: 3  
Luck: 3  
Aura: 5.5

Attack Rating: 12.5  
Defense Rating: 2]

[Passives

Nature Affinity Level 1: Increased health and mana regeneration within jungles, forests, and sunny, warm, or moist environments. Increases damage against enemies of the Chaotic Affinity by 10%.]

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Michael was laughing hysterically after reading the gigantic vixen's new title, before muttering "Seriously... I'm probably the only person in this whole damn world who would get that joke, ya know? Those 'Goddesses' must be really fucking bored; I'm surprised they didn't give me a 'Chronic Masterbator' title, or maybe they just consider that normal. Yeah, otherwise, ninety-percent of the male-Human population would be branded that way."

Then he pulled six, level-six, rank-G mana-cores out of his inventory. Each of them was from a 'Bengal Tiger,' and were a light-orange color.

Even after her transformation, Inari still acted like a hungry puppy, and whimpered in a surprisingly high-pitched voice, as she looked at the palm of Michael's hand. He smiled and said "Don't worry girl, these are for you." as he held his hand out to her.

The moment that she used her long, pink tongue to slurp up the beads, her body began glowing brightly. It made him wonder "Does being two ranks higher, make absorbing mana-cores easier?"

Once she had finished 'leveling-up,' he sighed and muttered "I guess it really is one point, per level, per rank..." As he chose to increase her Agility by three, he immediately noticed that the slightly sluggish and awkward fox, had started running and jumping around him excitedly.

When she stood on her hind-legs, she was actually a whole foot taller than Michael. Of course, that meant that she was only about two-meters long, since he was relatively short.

However, when she pounced into his arms, he was amazed at how incredibly light she was. For her size, Inari should have been at least four-hundred pounds, and that was just the base-line.

With her relatively high Strength, Endurance, and Vitality added into the mix, she would have been at least twice as heavy. Fortunately, Agility has a much larger effect on weight, than all three of those stats combined.

Michael casually tossed the bear-sized vixen into the air a few times, while telling her "Daw~, who's my adorable little puppy? Hehe~, you're so much nicer than that murderous little Thief, or that sneaky Priestess..." Then he pulled her into a tight hug

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and muttered “Unfortunately, you’re a fox, and not the sexy, kitsunemimi kind; well, I already have a cat-girl. Ugh, maybe I shouldn’t be basing my Companion choices on whether they’re racially diverse and female.”

Inari, like always, had no idea what the strange Human was talking about, but she enjoyed being played with, so she didn’t really care. After licking his face a few times, he finally let her go and said “Eww~, damn it... I wonder what they’re doing anyway? Huh, so they’re headed towards ‘Jacobstown.’ Whadda ya think girl? Should we go and see what they’re up to, or grind some levels in the jungle?”

The gigantic fox barked happily while trying to bite at the glowing ball, floating above his right hand. After letting out a long sigh, Michael nodded and gently caressed her fluffy green fur, while whispering “You’re right, sooner or later, they’ll just wind up getting themselves killed anyway. Once that happens, they’re gonna be so pissed... It’ll be hilarious; especially when they find out that while they were dicking around over there in the shitty plague-lands, they could have been power-leveling with us.”

As the two of them began walking westward, towards the ‘Tiger-Zone’ as he called it, Elina had finally exited the jungle. The Priestess had expected to find thousands of corpses, but all that remained were rotting wheat, corn, and other crops.

It had all been trampled upon and destroyed, then infested with horrible diseases. However, ‘Jacobstown’ was nowhere to be seen.

Even before the undead legions passed by, that village really wasn’t that large... but it was still visible from a distance. There had been a granary with a large windmill, plus some fairly tall barns and most importantly, she wasn’t very far away.

When she came closer to the wreckage, she noticed that all of the buildings had been completely flattened, and there were plenty of crushed tools and equipment laying about. There were no zombies or skeletons wandering around though, because the sun was still high in the sky; even if they had stuck around, the light would have disintegrated them all.

Elina sighed with relief as she saw the rubble of ‘The Roasted Maize,’ because she could immediately hear that familiar melody emanating from a few dozen meters away. It was as if a thousand Angels were calling out to her; an allure that anyone of the Light Affinity would experience.

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After a few minutes of digging through the broken logs and boards, she finally managed to uncover the remnants of her leather backpack. She grinned as she reached down and grabbed the dull, rusted and grayish object.

Just to be sure, she used her 'Scan Level-5' on it: "Rusted Key: Probably opens a lock somewhere. Unknown Quality, requires level-??? to use." Given the fact that it was literally calling out to her, and was at least Epic, she knew that it was obviously a very special item.

However, her satisfied smile instantly disappeared when she heard a deep and raspy voice asking "Did you honestly think that we would ever stop hunting you, heretic?" Unlike Darkness-Thieves that could hide in the shadows, Inquisitor's specialized in manipulating light, to create another form of invisibility.

Dressed in pure-white, full-body leather armor, and covered in cloth robes, with silver masks over their faces, five people had surrounded her. One was clearly a woman, while the other four were men, but all of them were around the same height of six-feet tall.

The one who spoke was standing directly in front of Elina, and his golden eyes shone with a bright radiance; even if his blank mask didn't reveal anything else, she could feel that they were definitely going to kill her. Then a seed of doubt started to sprout in her mind "What if I'm too far away from Michael? Actually, what if he decides not to resurrect me? No-no, he doesn't even know that I abandoned him, so there's no way he would... Wait, if I die, then he'll definitely find it suspicious, right?"

She immediately tried to store the key into her only bag-slot, but it just told her "Unable to store items that are over fifty levels above your own." Her whole body trembled in fear; she didn't want to die, but losing that divine artifact, which her Goddess had personally asked her to obtain, was far more terrifying.

As she used 'Identification Level-6' on the person in front of her, she trembled even more. He was "Anthony the Holy Reaper, Level-14 Human High-Inquisitor, Rank-G."

Compared to magical-beasts, the danger of humanoids usually depended more on their skill-levels, tactics, and equipment. It was obvious with just a glance that the five of them were wearing uniforms, which meant that they probably weren't Soulbound, but created by holy craftsmen.

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While his name and level were very intimidating to the defenseless Priestess, Sarah was just watching everything play out, as if it didn't even concern her. She was hiding in the rubble of the neighboring building; the six of them were so enthralled by that strange key, that they didn't even notice the little Thief.

Elina bit her lip and threatened "You're calling me the heretic? The Goddess of Light herself has commanded me to obtain this divine relic, and bring it to the Luxian Vaults! Yet you greedy murderers dare to blaspheme Her Holiness in such a despicable way?!"

Anthony immediately retorted "Nonsense! The Archangel Laoth ordered me to retrieve that sacred treasure, and execute any heretics who dare to lay their filthy hands upon it!"

It was at that moment that two messages appeared before Sarah: "Quest Complete: Elina is in a seemingly hopeless situation, surrounded by five Inquisitors, who are determined to kill her. Everything seems to be related to that mysterious, rusted key." Then her experience bar had quickly filled to 50/60, and a new part of her 'bag' was unlocked, which allowed her to store currencies.

She had a wide grin on her face, as she read the second notification: "Class-Change Quest: The main objective of Thieves, is to steal from others, but there are limits. You care more about power than money, and you enjoy reaping lives, much more than profits. Umbra has felt your hate, witnessed your desire, and heard your prayers. Five Inquisitors are about to murder your Companion; kill them. Reward: New Class, fifty experience-points, and a Soulbound item."

Sarah snickered and then glanced at the arrogant white-cloaked enemies, who didn't even have any visible weapons on them. After a few seconds, a dark cloud suddenly passed by, which signaled her assault.

Just when Anthony wrapped his relatively large hands around the cat-girl's throat, a tiny figure appeared between the two of them, and he suddenly felt a searing pain in his groin. Both of those poisoned daggers had instantly castrated him.

Even though there was a huge level-gap, there wasn't much of a difference in actual stats. Generally speaking, F-rank was usually twice as powerful as G, so they were about even in that regard.

Obviously, he had a major advantage in combat experience and equipment... but it still wasn't enough to make him immune to her critical-strike of '-19.' Considering that his



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maximum health had only been thirty, she had dealt him a nearly fatal blow; with the massive bleeding, alongside the poison, he was dying very quickly.

When Elina cast 'Blinding Light,' his eyes burned out of their sockets, and he screamed in agony for a moment, before promptly dying. A huge '+7 Exp' popped-up, as Sarah immediately moved on to her next target.

Activating 'Hate-Strike,' she ducked down and stabbed into the only female's tailbone, with her left dagger. A lethal amount of Darkness mana, surged up the woman's spine, into her brain, and caused her whole health-pool to vanish instantly.

After that, the three remaining Inquisitors finally reacted, and each attacked at the same time. As their fists and legs were flung out, small blades erupted from their white-leather boots and gauntlets. Rather than poison, their weapons were enchanted to deal Light damage, and if any of them had landed a decent hit on Sarah, she definitely would have died.

However, unlike Michael, she had been training for nearly her entire life. Of course, those three men had many more years of experience than her; fortunately, there was something much more important than practice, or equipment.

The little girl suddenly leaped two meters into the air, dodging all three attacks, and then spinning her entire body. That long and relatively thick, worm-like tail was whipped into the back of one man's hooded-head, dropping his health to 5/20 and stunning him.

As the other two turned around and punched towards her, their foot-long blades managed to tear the leather armor on her back, but that was all. After spinning sideways in the air, she stabbed a small rusty dagger straight through the left eye-socket of the man, farthest to the right.

Then she latched onto the other man's neck with her slimy tail, gripping it tightly, and as she landed, rolled between his legs and caused his entire body to perform a front-flip. The sharp barbs that were lodging into his veins and arteries, had caused massive lacerations across the sides of his throat, and he had also received a 'diseased' and 'poisoned' debuff, on top of 'critically-bleeding.'

After that, she used her last remaining dagger and casually walked over to the concussed Inquisitor, whose mask had fallen off. She was laughing hysterically, as she turned his face to her, and slowly gouge out both of his eyes; then pried out half of his surprisingly white teeth, before his health finally reached zero.

## Chapter 36: Class Change

Elina was cowering on the ground and crying, while clutching the key in both of her hands. She prayed “Goddess forgive me, I’ve taken the life of one of your children...” It was actually the first time that she had ever killed another person before.

Paladins or Crusaders of different sects or races slaughtering each-other was fairly normal, but she was a Priestess of Light, who specialized in healing. Similar to how sex was a taboo, ending the life of another person of the Light Affinity, was an incredibly grave sin.

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Contrary to her fears of divine punishment, she received a message: “Light Affinity has reached level-5.” Something that she had been meditating, praying, and working towards for so long, had been achieved after she committed such a terrible crime.

While she was suffering from a large amount of mental shock, Sarah’s body began glowing brightly. Then a monotonous feminine voice resounded “You have reached level-7.”

Before she had the chance to invest any stat-points, she received notification: “Class-Change Quest Completed: A Thief who kills for the sake of stealing a person’s belongings and becoming wealthy, is considered a Bandit. However, an Assassin is also, in the end, someone who murders for a profit. You desire something more, you crave the bloodshed, you love the brutality, and most importantly... you despise yourself for being weak. There is great power in Darkness, but the proper path cannot be chosen for you.”

After that, she was shown three different weapons: A dagger, a sickle, then a slightly curved short-sword, which had only a single blade. They were each simple, dull and unimpressive, so there was certainly no difference in quality between them.

She grumbled “Ugh, what the fuck is all this bullshit? Some kinda test?” Then she turned to the weeping Priestess and yelled “Hey, Dumbass, stop crying like a little bitch and help me decide something!”

Elina immediately snapped out of her shock and looked around her, noticing that all of the white-clothed Inquisitors had been dyed completely red, from their own blood. The corpses were sprawled out onto the inn’s rubble, and a horrible stench was wafting through the air.

Those dark clouds were still blocking out the sunlight, and she witnessed countless incorporeal spirits wandering around the ruins. After gazing up at Sarah, she asked “Why would you help me?”

The Bloodworm-Goblin scowled, before complaining “The hell are you talking about? I killed them because of a Quest; the same reason why I followed you here, and now I need to pick between a dagger, a sickle and a short-sword for some reason. I can use either of the three, but I’m pretty sure the one I choose, is gonna decide what my new Class turns into. Whaddya think?”

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Elina grabbed a leather money-pouch off of one of the corpses and placed the rusty key inside, then muttered “A sickle is used by Farmers, Ninja, and Cultists or Necromancers; Daggers and short-swords are too vague... explain their appearances more clearly.”

Sarah tilted her head and said “Let’s see... well, the dagger is kinda wavy, like a slithering snake. The sword has only one edge, and its curved slightly, aside from that, there’s a mark on the hilt of each one. Fuck it, I’ll just go with the...”

When she had finally decided, a pitch-black fog enveloped her body and swirled around rapidly for a few moments, before condensing into the form of a weapon. The Priestess immediately used her ‘Scan’ on the object, and a screen popped-up in-front of both of them: “Obsidian Wakizashi: Increases the wielder’s Dexterity, Agility and Willpower by one, and Attack Rating by twenty. Soulbound to Sarah Carelia, and can only be worn by her. Rare Quality, requires level--five.”

It was certainly an excellent sword, but she still complained “Didn’t even come with a fucking scabbard...” However, she was amazed to discover the pitch-black blade started entering inside of her right palm, and turning into a tattoo.

Then a notification told her “Right-Hand Weapon has been Unequipped: Obsidian Wakizashi.” Reading that, Elina quickly attempted to do the same for her own Soulbound item.

After the cat-girl’s clothes started glowing with a blinding radiance, they suddenly disappeared and only a white seal was left on the center of her chest. With a thought, she was instantly wearing her ‘Robe of Purity’ again.

The stat-bonuses obviously disappear once an item is Unequipped, but at least it could potentially save a lot of bag-space. Elina exclaimed “This is ridiculous! I can’t believe that something so convenient is even possible!”

Sarah glared at her as she pulled out the short-sword and ordered “Shut-up and help me loot the damn corpses... We should really get out of here before more of these bastards show-up.” Then the Priestess reluctantly started collecting all the coins that she could find on the bodies, while the Goblin unhesitantly tore open their skulls to retrieve the tiny white beads at the center of their brains.

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In total, they gained one gold, seventy-nine silver, and forty-three copper; along with five Light-Affinity, rank-G, level-ten to fourteen, Human mana-cores. Unfortunately, all of the clothes and other equipment were completely unusable by either of them.

Covered in blood and grime, Elina started crying again, while asking “Goddess of Light, what should I do now?”

At that moment, a familiar voice resounded in both of their minds: “Oh hey~, so there really is a ‘Whisper’ feature, huh? Well whatever, congrats on the level-up and Class-change... You should probably put a point in Intelligence and Wisdom, since your mana-usage is pretty outrageous at the moment.”

Sarah casually replied “Yeah, that’s what I was gonna do...” as she immediately opened up her status-screen.

[Companion Information

Name: Sarah  
Titles: The Tree-Hater  
Level: 7  
Experience: 67/70  
Age: Adult  
Race: Bloodworm-Goblin  
Rank: F  
Class: Shadow  
Specialization: Stealth, Melee Damage Dealer  
Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

Health: 30/30  
Mana: 20/20  
Stamina: 15/15

Mana Regen per minute: 30  
Health Regen per hour: 30  
Strength: 2  
Vitality: 3  
Endurance: 3  
Dexterity: 3(+1)

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Agility: 5(+1)  
Intelligence: 4  
Wisdom: 3  
Perception: 2(+2)  
Charisma: 2

Willpower: 5(+1)  
Luck: 3  
Aura: 1.5

Attack Rating: 10(+23)  
Defense Rating: 1.5(+1)]

[Passives

Immune System Boost Level 5: Resists Level five infectious diseases and illnesses.

Superior Regeneration Level 1: Organs and bones that have been lost, can be completely regenerated. Recovery speed is dependent on the amount of mana consumed.

Cutaneous Respiration Level 1: Able to absorb oxygen through the skin, as long as it's properly hydrated. Effectiveness is dependent on Vitality.

Darkness Affinity Level 4: Dark environments increase the speed of health and mana recovery. Increases damage to enemies with Light Affinity by 40%.

Dagger Mastery Level 3: Increases Attack Rating while wielding knives, short-swords, and daggers by 15%.

Aura of Darkness Level 1: Killing enemies of the Light Attribute will increase the Aura stat by 1% of their level.]

[Spellbook

Shadow-Step Level 3: Teleports into the target's shadow. Range is dependent on Agility. Costs ten mana-points to activate.

Shadow-Cloak Level 2: Creates a shroud of darkness around the caster and all allies within range. Range is dependent on the Aura stat. Costs one mana-point per second.

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Hate-Strike Level 1: Channels Dark-Mana into the caster's weapons, polluting the enemy's body and soul with destructive energy. Damage is dependent on the Aura stat. Twice as effective on enemies of the Light affinity. Costs five mana per second.]

Elina nervously asked "Michael? Why are you awake? Your Stamina was definitely depleted a few hours ago; actually, how are you even talking to us right now?" Telepathic magic wasn't that uncommon, but it was usually only usable by Arcane-Mages and was completely one-sided; even her sister had been able to send simple messages, but the distance was limited by the mana-consumption.

He snickered and explained "Well, I was sleeping, until a certain cat-girl started talking about a mission they needed to take care of, and woke me up. Before I had a chance to pass-out again, a slimy little creeper started licking and molesting me for no particular reason, so I got turned on and had to masturbate... Unfortunately, with nothing but my imagination, it took me a while. Then right when it was finally about to fucking end, this asshole slime killed me. Sigh, anyway~, I'm about to start hunting with Inari now, so I'll meet you guys back at the waterfall in a few hours." He may have left out the fact that he could always see and hear what was happening, even while his body was unconscious.

Sarah was already starting to walk eastward, as Elina was still listlessly standing in the bloody rubble and wondering what she should do. Then that disembodied voice appeared again, "Oh yeah! I checked out that Quest you're on right now, and was just wondering... Are you a fucking idiot? You're like level seven, and you found the key to an endgame dungeon or raid, but you think that if you just show up at the destination, you'll be able to accomplish something? Hell, it says that as long as you're carrying the fucking thing, some douche-bag is gonna keep sending assassins to kill you. Just let me know when you're about to die, so I can at least make sure my Health is topped off first. Whether you ignore my advice and try to go there on your own, or decided to meet-up with me in a few hours, we'll still be seeing each-other again soon."

## Chapter 37: Grinding in the Jungle

It took Michael and Inari a whole hour to find their first quarry, though it wasn't exactly what he was looking for. Tigers were easy to deal with, because they always traveled alone, but the enemies that the two of them faced were a lot more numerous.

He complained "Since when do lions even live in the fucking jungle? Ugh, well whatever, at least there's only six of them." Aside from the fact that they were covered in shimmering silver fur, the rank-G, level-five lionesses, were fairly similar to the kind that normally lived in the savannas in his original world.

Without thinking about any sort of strategies or tactics, Michael immediately took out the Arcane Orb from his inventory and pitched it towards the one that was closest to him. Meanwhile, Inari growled at them and the moment that three of the felines pounced at her relatively large body, she leaped into the air.



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Her Agility was extremely high, combined with the sheer size of her frame, her jump had easily reached three meters upwards. Then the four tails latched onto a giant tree-branch and waited until the lionesses landed, before she started her counter-attack.

Even with the distance being so close, Michael still needed time to throw and receive the ball. As he pitched the second strike in a row, his first target had died and rewarded him with five experience-points.

However, a different one pounced towards him as he was catching the Arcane Orb, so he wasn't able to dodge in time. Noticing her partner's crisis, Inari used her hind legs to launch herself downwards, chomping the back of the airborne lioness' neck, and slamming her into the ground.

A huge '-55' appeared, and then with a quick jerk, the cat's head was literally torn off. Michael started laughing hysterically, and praised "Good girl! Now stop playing around with the carcass and help me kill the other three!"

Seeing that gruesome scene, the three remaining felines were slightly frightened and turned all of their attention towards the gigantic vixen. Even when the naked man threw the seemingly harmless ball at their bodies, they just ignored it and banded together to use their only spell.

As the lionesses roared, it caused Inari's mind to become hazy, and nearly knocked her unconscious, while directly dealing over twenty-five points of damage. Fortunately, the combined attack was weakened when one of the three cats was swiftly killed by two bounces of a brightly-glowing ball.

After that, she was furious, and pounced at the one which was to her left, while Michael attacked the other. With a quiet whimper, one was reduced to zero health, while the other was viciously torn apart by the overbearing Quad-Tailed Nature-Fox. As the fifth lioness died, his body started glowing brightly and he heard that monotonous voice announcing "You have reached level seven."

Out of curiosity, he placed both points into Perception, but when he did, both of his dark-brown irises began glowing bright-red. He glanced around a few times and yelled "Holy shit, it's like I'm wearing glasses! Hahaha~, I can finally see again!"

His vision was superhuman when he was in wisp-form, but normally, everything was so blurry, that he could barely recognize his own parents from more than five meters away. However, it wasn't merely his eyesight that had been enhanced.

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Michael could hear all of the annoying animal noises within several miles, even louder and clearer. He could actually sense the mana in the air around him, and when he looked at his mini-map, there were plenty of white, yellow, red and purple dots, surrounding the two blue ones.

From his understanding of game mechanics, he muttered “White means they’re too weak to pose a threat, yellow is probably within our level range, red would most likely be dangerous, while purple will definitely kill us.”

After Inari devoured the five mana-cores, Michael collected the carcasses and turned them directly into pelts. Then he accessed the crafting menu, and sacrificed one of his field-mouse mana-cores to create some new equipment.

There was a bright-white flash, and he received a message: “Pristine Novice Silver-Lioness Fur Armor: Grants the wearer four Defense Rating, and two agility. Made to fit a short and muscular, male Human. Uncommon Quality, must be at least level--five to equip.”

It was nearly identical to the version which was made from white-rabbits, except for the fact that it came with a belt. The kilt and boots were extremely reflective, so it definitely wouldn’t have been very useful to a stealthy Class, but that didn’t really matter to him.

Noticing that the gigantic vixen’s Health was extremely low, Michael pulled out a rank-G, level-nine, ‘Bengal Tiger’ mana-core. Inari whimpered and begged for it, while gazing up at him with her huge bright-blue eyes. He chuckled and unhesitantly tossed it into her bloody maw, which immediately caused her whole body to radiate a blinding light.

[Companion Information

Name: Inari  
Titles: The Feeder  
Level: 5  
Experience: 2/50  
Age: Child  
Race: Quad-Tailed Nature-Fox  
Rank: E  
Class: None  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Unemployed]

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[Stats

Health: 40/40  
Mana: 20/20  
Stamina: 20/20  
Mana Regen per minute: 20  
Health Regen per hour: 40  
Strength: 4.5  
Vitality: 4  
Endurance: 4  
Dexterity: 1  
Agility: 7  
Intelligence: 4  
Wisdom: 2  
Perception: 4  
Charisma: 1

Willpower: 3  
Luck: 3  
Aura: 5.5

Attack Rating: 12.5  
Defense Rating: 2]

His reason for increasing her Intelligence by two and her Wisdom by one, was an attempt to allow her access to magic. Even the random rabbits that he had met in 'Ariel's Meadow' were able to reinforce their bodies with mana, and use a 'Headbutt' spell.

However, there was a big difference between those little rodents and his adorable vixen: maturity. In the wild, magical-beasts were always adults already, because any baby animal that managed to evolve, would be immediately killed for their mana-core.

Inari had only been a regular red-fox kit a few days prior, and she was far too young to understand anything that complicated. Fortunately, stats were more important than anything else in that world, and Intelligence could increase a creature's learning speed dramatically.

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Michael smiled warmly, while gazing into her eyes and asking her “Can you understand me now?” She just tilted her head to the left, while panting loudly, and wagging her four tails in different directions.

After sighing dramatically, he grumbled “Of course you can’t... Ugh, even I took six months before I started speaking, and I’m a fucking Human. Hmm, I did have a cat that could talk once, but she could only scream ‘Help!’ and ‘No!’ Well, whatever, let’s just go tiger-hunting.”

The reason why it was so rare for both humanoids and magical-beasts to make it past level-ten, was obviously due to the fact that they didn’t respawn. Death was relatively permanent for the majority of creatures, though not all; past a certain point, there were spells and techniques to resurrect others or themselves, but that was a realm of power that the majority of people never had the chance to reach or even know about.

Michael complained “Fuck my life; it’s probably gonna take a few days to reach level-ten.” Only an aberration like Sarah wouldn’t think that he was completely insane.

He wasn’t wrong, but according to his gaming-knowledge, the first twenty levels could usually be gained in less than a day. However, he had also played ‘RPGs’ on ‘hardcore’ difficulty, where his character would be deleted if he died.

Not only was he terrible at them, he also hated them with a passion, and preferred the easier ones. Under such harsh conditions, he would have already ‘lost’ the moment he was transported into that strange and magical world.

Fortunately, Michael’s only punishment for death, was the horrible, agonizing pain that typically accompanied it. The ‘NPCs’ on the other hand, needed to be excessively cautious and careful, slowly and steadily training, then eventually starting to hunt in groups.

That was also one of the biggest advantages that the ‘Player’ had. Anyone could ‘Solo’ monsters or other people, and receive the full amount of experience from each kill.

Parties however, were slightly different from the equal distribution that a Player and their Companions shared. The leader received thirty-percent, and the others would automatically split forty-percent, and then another thirty-percent would simply be lost.

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As for Raids, which consisted of ten to forty people, they would lose half of the experience gained by the group. Armies were the absolute worst, and only a tenth was actually retained.

Under such harsh conditions, it wasn't that strange for most adventurers, soldiers, and just about anyone else, to require massive amounts of time and effort, in order to 'safely' raise their levels. There was also another issue, which Michael had just discovered after casually throwing his Arcane Orb at a level-one, rank-G, 'Golden-Ringed Lemur.'

When the relatively small creature died, he sighed and muttered "Figured as much..." Once Inari completely devoured the monkey, including its mana-core, a '+1 Exp' popped-up above her head. He smirked and said "So there's a five-level experience barrier, huh? Otherwise, wouldn't there be a bunch of crazy overpowered assholes, constantly going around the starting zone and farming all the noobs? There would be no reason for NPCs to risk their lives, fighting against powerful enemies, because they could just head over to a field full of bunnies and go on a grinding-spree."

## Chapter 38: Quadra-Kill

In a fight between a black-bear and a tiger, the big-cat would be the most-likely victor. However, when the opponent was a gigantic green-furred, Quad-Tailed Nature-Fox, it was a much different story.

Inari cowered in fear when she was first exposed to those ferocious eyes, and that terrifying roar, but after Michael easily bounced his Arcane Orb against the beast's head twice, it was dead. He scolded the vixen "Seriously, stop being such a pussy! Ugh, it's only one level higher than you, and two whole ranks lower! Hey, don't cry, that's cheating! Sigh, you're so adorable that I can't even get angry at you... Go, eat the damn mana-core and bring me back the carcass."

Even though it sounded like he was ordering her around, he was actually just talking to himself. The huge fox was simply following her instincts when she ran over and devoured the tiny orange bead, and then he had to walk over and store the tiger himself; it weighed close to six-hundred pounds, and the huge kit didn't have the leverage or strength, to carry something that big and heavy in her mouth.

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He felt as if his attack damage was extremely overpowered, but that was only because he had the advantage in range. A single swipe of those claws could eviscerate him, and a tiny bite could tear his head off with ease.

Michael grumbled “It probably wouldn’t be that bad if I had really amazing, heavy, plate-armor... but at the moment, I’m practically naked. Hell, it feels like ‘Glass-Cannon’ describes pretty much everything I’ve seen so far. Even that damn tree-bear was only hard to kill, because I was just throwing rocks at it; if I had this little ball back then, it would die in eight hits, and probably not even realize it was getting hurt. Of course, I’d still lose an arm again, but that’s exactly the problem. I really wanna be a tank, but I don’t know if that’s even possible in this world.”

As he was eating the last white-rabbit, just to clear out that bag-slot, the two of them were steadily heading deeper into tiger-territory. He noticed that even camouflaged enemies would appear on his mini-map, as long as they weren’t actively using stealth-magic.

Half an hour later, he finally came across what he was searching for; it appeared as a silver dot on his mini-map. Michael snickered and turned to the frightened vixen, while whispering “Calm down Inari, don’t be afraid... I’m here, and you’re a lot stronger than you realize.” while channeling mana into his vocal-cords and gently caressing her fur.

As he was doing that, a notification popped up: “Enthrall Level 2: Charm the target by speaking in a calm and gentle voice, infused with mana. Able to remove fear-related debuffs from friendly targets. Effectiveness is dependent on the Level difference between the caster and the target. Potency is dependent on the Charisma stat.”

If it was impossible to counter ‘Intimidation’ or other similar spells, then all fights would be easily decided based on who had the higher Willpower. Fortunately, that wasn’t the case, and once he used ‘Enthrall’ on the giant fox, she received a buff called ‘Courage.’

The enemy before them was one that really deserved to be feared; three-meters tall at the shoulder, a body length of three times that, it was certainly a very dangerous and powerful beast. However, Michael was grinning happily, while sending out a message: “Oh hey, guess what I found? Hehe~, a certain kitty-cat’s gonna finally evolve tonight...”

Above the creature’s head was “White Bengal Tiger of Light, Level-9, Rank-F, Elite.” Aside from being gigantic, and glowing brightly, there wasn’t anything too strange about its physiology.

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As the two huge, golden eyes glared at the relatively small man and fox, the monstrous animal roared loudly at them. A beam of ultraviolet radiation bombarded them and not just blinded, but also deafened and caused severe sunburn.

Michael received much more damage, since Inari had fur covering most of her skin. However, they were still relatively healthy, until the gigantic tiger pounced on them, and crushed their bodies into a meaty paste.

While the beast was struggling to find the tiny mana-cores in all of that mess, a pitch-black wisp was floating around, while grumbling “This is gonna be a lot more annoying than I anticipated... Ugh, this fucker only has a hundred and fifty HP, so I just need to stay alive for a few seconds.”

Then a naked Human materialized onto the back of the tiger’s neck and immediately released a blood-curdling scream, enhanced by mana, while pulling both of the creature’s fluffy ears close to his mouth. Unfortunately, the spell was directly related to the Aura-stat, which he had less than two points of.

After being startled, but not deafened, the colossal feline leaped five meters into the air and smacked its head against an incredibly thick tree-branch. Michael was once again crushed to death, though he did manage to cause the enemy to gain a ‘stunned’ debuff, and drop down to 120/150 health.

When he tried to respawn right away, he received a notification: “Still in combat, cannot resurrect at this time.”

He yelled “Oh for fuck’s sake!” as he moved a dozen meters away from the tiger, and tried again, but it wouldn’t work until the ‘stunned’ debuff ended. The moment that he appeared, Michael pulled the Arcane Orb from his inventory, and immediately pitched it at the tiger.

A small ‘-20’ appeared, and he instantly realized the huge flaw in his plan. It took two seconds for the ball to return to his hand, and the damage done seemed to be dependent on the distance from his target.

As the beast sprinted towards him, he was able to get off a second attack at point-blank range, and a ‘-40’ popped-up. Then the gigantic mouth chomped down on the top-half of his body, and he was able to experience a few seconds of excruciating pain, before dying for the third time.

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In wisp-form, Michael cursed “This motherfucking cunt!” and didn’t even move away from it, before respawning behind the beast’s massive tail. He roared “You piece of shit! Give me back my goddamn ball!”

Suddenly his mana started to drain at a rapid pace, and the tiger roared in agony, as the relatively small Arcane Orb began tearing its way through the lining of its stomach. After a few seconds, the colossal feline collapsed and its Health reached zero; a huge ‘+36 Exp’ appeared, as he stopped telekinetically pulling on the weapon and simply stored the whole carcass into his inventory.

After shoving it into the newly empty bag-slot four, he sighed and caught the surprisingly clean, brightly glowing ball. Michael smirked and muttered “Seems like this big bastards are still pretty squishy on the inside, huh? Ugh, now I’m naked again...”

He sacrificed five of the regular, level-six, Bengal Tiger carcasses and his last rank-G field-mouse mana-core, to create a new set of fur armor. It had the same ‘+2 Agility, and +4 Defense Rating’ as the silver lioness equipment, but simply had an orange and white, with black-stripes pattern: The level-requirement was also six, instead of five.

The irritated man didn’t bother storing the pair of Human legs that were still laying there, but his sight was drawn to a strange object that was just laying on the dirt. With his enhanced vision, he could obviously see it perfectly clearly, yet he still reflexively squinted his eyes as he approached. Michael reached down and picked it up, while using ‘Scan’ and couldn’t help but ask “What the actual fuck?”

“White Bengal Tiger of Light: A magical trading card. Increases Charisma and Agility by one point if consumed by a Player. Can be used in various card games. Rare Quality, requires level-five to activate.” It was a type of item that hadn’t existed in that world for so long, that even the oldest of the Elves had never seen one.

After staring at it for a few moments, he blew off the dirt and was about to shove it into his mouth, but then it suddenly burst into blindingly bright flames. It didn’t burn him, though the fumes began forcing their way into his lungs, even when he was holding his breath. While he was coughing and choking violently, a message popped-up: “Agility and Charisma have increased by one.”

When he could finally breathe properly again, Michael shouted “I fucking hate smoke! Gah, why the hell does gaining stat-points have to be so painful, disgusting, or uncomfortable?! Shouldn’t it feel good?!” After regaining his composure, he grumbled “Those Goddesses obviously despise ‘Casuals’ huh?”



## Chapter 39: A Daily Quest

Charisma was a very ambiguous stat. It was more than just beauty or the ability to physically attract others; aside from influencing charm-related spells, it also made a person or creature seem more likable and reliable.

Depending on the Charisma of a Party, Raid, or Army's leader, the teamwork would naturally increase. However, Michael was mainly just interested in the fact that his teeth had strangely become white and much straighter.

He muttered "Five-thousand fucking dollars and two goddamn years of braces in the other world... and all I had to do was invest a single stat-point in this world to get a much better result. Sigh~, oh well, even the thousands of acne scars are gone. My face looks about the same, but did I get taller? Ugh, nope, that's probably only possible with evolution..."

The reason why adventurers were typically never considered 'ugly,' was because they usually had at least one point of Charisma. It explained why in Riverside Village, most of the 'normal' people weren't very aesthetically pleasing.

After stretching his arms out and yawning loudly, Michael removed Inari from his first Companion-slot, and was greeted by a completely clueless vixen. She sniffed around and barked a few times before scampering off to the southwest.

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With his Strength at six and Agility at seven points, the Human's body felt amazingly light, and he briskly followed after the fox without much effort. Of course, he could have caught up with her if he had sprinted, but he just complained "I really need to learn some kinda flying spell, or maybe teleportation..."

It wasn't as if they didn't exist; in fact, all Elements had various forms of both... but they were usually used in combat. The amount of mana required to use either one for travel purposes, was simply unreasonable: not to mention the 'Aura' that was necessary.

When he finally found the giant fluorescent-green vixen, she barked loudly at the base of a truly massive, bright-blue tree. Michael looked around and didn't find anything particularly strange about that specific plant; it wasn't a monster from what he could tell, but there was something odd that occurred when he approached. On the mini-map, a name suddenly appeared: "Entrance to the Forgotten Grotto."

He stared at it for a few moments, while murmuring "Dungeon, hidden village, or possibly an abandoned spa..." Without thinking too deeply about it, he simply walked up and touched the mossy bark, then yelled "Activate! Teleport! Open up, motherfucker!"

Then he noticed that Inari stopped barking and copied what he was doing, putting both of her front paws on the tree, right next to his hand. She howled loudly, and unconsciously channeled her Nature-Affinity mana into the bark.

Michael snickered while petting her fluffy-green mane and saying "Good girl, you're such a smart puppy~." It took a few seconds, but the two of them were eventually enveloped in a bright-blue aura, and then vanished.

They suddenly appeared, over a mile underground, in a surprisingly brightly-lit cavern. Illustrious, azure, crystalline stalactites were hanging from the ceiling and illuminating the entire area.

A Quad-Tailed Nature-Fox, along with a Human of the Arcane Element, had arrived in the home of a long-forgotten, rank-A, 'Raid Boss.' Huge blue roots ran down the walls of the grotto, and aside from the single limestone platform, that the two newcomers were standing on, everything else was a relatively clear, bright-green lake.

When he saw the colossal, viridian snapping-turtle's head, resting only a few meters in front of him, Michael snickered and muttered "I guess its level is too high for me to read, huh?" Inari was sitting down and didn't even seem flustered by the gigantic creature, which made him guess "This guy probably isn't an enemy; maybe a Quest-Giver?"

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As the massive eyelids slowly opened, two enormous, azure orbs suddenly focused on the two of them. It attempted to move, but could only groan deeply in agony; then a masculine voice erupted from its titanic beak: "I thank you for heeding my call young ones... Though I'm a little surprised at your calmness in my presence. Even if I'm not nearly as formidable as I was a thousand years ago, I didn't think it was to such an extent that a kit and a Human would enter my domain so casually."

Michael smiled at him and asked "Yeah, I get it, you're old and decrepit, can we skip the ancient history and get to the point? You want something, right?"

Instead of getting angry, the turtle laughed loudly, before coughing violently, and nearly deafening the two of them. Eventually, he said "Indeed, I can barely even remember what happened back then anyway... As you surely know, the more powerful a creature's body becomes, the harder it is to properly feed. Of course, if you're proficient in Nature and Water magic, like myself... sustaining yourself doesn't even require a thought. Unfortunately, the Goddesses are never quite so kind."

The man smirked and asked "Let me guess... You've felt as if you were starving to death the whole fucking time, right? Heh~, so what kinda food does 'Goliath the Devourer' typically eat?"

After hearing his name called, the colossal snapping turtle muttered "Impressive, your 'Identification' technique must be rather extraordinary to actually gather that much information on me... Hmmm, Michael the Immortal? That title is very strange; from what I can tell, you're merely a level-seven, rank-F Human. You don't even possess a Class, and... wait, that can't be right. You've only been alive for nineteen minutes?"

Michael sighed and explained "Yeah, I just died like three times in a row. I think that was a record for most deaths in one minute by the way. Enough about my awesome title, back to the grocery list..."

Goliath started laughing loudly, then told him "Indeed, we've only just met, there's no reason for you to reveal your secrets to a complete stranger. Ah~, I can hardly even believe that there was someone kind enough to visit this old man... Don't worry, I will certainly reward you greatly for your benevolence. Hmmm~, it's been so long since I last tasted anything but water and tree-sap, I can't even remember what my favorite food used to be. Everything is fine, but the bigger the better: meat, vegetables, fruit, I honestly don't care at this point."

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After the turtle finished speaking, a notification popped-up: “New Quest: Goliath the Devourer has been starving for over a thousand years; although he won’t die, the hunger has turned the ancient Raid Boss, into a docile, but desperate magical-beast. He has accumulated an extraordinary amount of wealth over his lifetime, yet he would sacrifice it all, in order to finally sate his appetite. Rewards will depend on the quality and quantity of the meal.”

The first thing that Michael did was extend his hands and make four rather large, unranked, level-four crocodile carcasses appear. As they dropped to the ground, they were so fresh that their bodies were still convulsing.

Dozens of purple octopus-tentacles erupted from that gigantic maw, and quickly wrapped around the eight-thousand pounds of meat, effortlessly pulling it into Goliath’s beak. He chewed a few times, and the entire carcasses were dissolved by only his saliva. As each one was digested, a ‘+2 Exp, +1 Silver’ appeared in the corner of Michael’s vision.

However, even if it was relatively insignificant, the turtle still laughed heartily, and said “Thank you, truly; though a bit lacking, it was still very tasty. I’m amazed that you’re capable of performing extra-dimensional storage-magic, but it sure is convenient...”

Michael snickered and told him “Ah, I have a lot more, if you’re interested. To be completely honest, I’m a bit of a hoarder, so I’ve just been collecting things, expecting to eventually sell them to someone... might as well be you. Let’s see~; these little bastards caused me some much trouble back then, but they probably aren’t even worth a few cents.”

With a wave of his hand, seven large grey rats flew out: each a level-one field-mouse. Those giant tentacles erupted again, catching the carcasses before they even touched the ground, and swiftly pulling them all into the colossal mouth. Each one was worth one experience point and half a silver, or fifty coppers.

Compared to the crocodiles, Goliath seemed a lot more satisfied by the rank-G magical beasts. Before he had a chance to say anything, a giant rank-F, level-8 ‘Stealthy Boa-Constrictor’ appeared.

Even though it had been sliced in half, the carcass which materialized had both sides attached. The creature was still squirming around, when the tentacles grabbed it, and the massive turtle happily slurped it up like a tiny noodle.

After receiving sixteen experience and eight silver coins, Michael's body began glowing brightly. Then a monotonous, feminine voice announced "You have reached level-eight."

## Chapter 40: Quest Rewards

### [Player Information

Name: Michael  
Titles: The Nudist, The Noob, The Immortal, The Lurker, The Survivor  
Level: 8  
Experience: 4/80  
Age: Adult  
Race: Human  
Rank: F  
Class: None  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Leatherworker Level 3]

### [Stats

Health: 52.5/52.5  
Mana: 30/30  
Stamina: 30/30  
Mana Regen per minute: 30  
Health Regen per hour: 45

Strength: 6  
Vitality: 4.5  
Endurance: 6  
Dexterity: 3  
Agility: 5(+2)  
Intelligence: 4(+2)  
Wisdom: 3

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Perception: 3  
Charisma: 2

Willpower: 14  
Luck: 14  
Aura: 1.9

Attack Power: 30(+11.5)  
Defense Rating: 3(+4)]

Continuing with his attempt to become a 'Tank,' Michael decided to place both stat-points into Endurance. After witnessing the Human leveling-up, Goliath chuckled, and said "It seems that the Goddesses have already rewarded you for assisting me... However, I don't want you to think that I'm so shameless, that I can't even afford to compensate you myself. Hmm~ , let me ask you a question... What is worth more to you: one gold coin, a rare sword, or a skill-book?"

Without a moment of hesitation he asked "Any item that isn't Soulbound probably won't last very long, and money is always easy to make in a world like this. Are there really people stupid enough to pick anything but the skill-book? It doesn't even matter if I can use it or not."

The giant turtle laughed heartily as it told him "Good, good, you're a lot less shortsighted than most of the Humans that I've encountered. Of course, you're also the first one that I haven't eaten as well. Now, more importantly, would you prefer a spell or passive? Like you just mentioned, even though I can't use them, I've still collected hundreds over the years..."

Michael smiled at the colossal turtle and said "As you can see, I have the Arcane Affinity; I was wondering if there were any passive techniques for increasing my Aura stat. I could obviously shove a bunch of mana-cores down my throat, but I'd prefer something a bit less horrible."

Almost as soon as he finished talking, a vine suddenly erupted from the green pool, and pushed a small brown treasure-chest, onto the limestone platform. He immediately took a few steps forward and opened the surprisingly water-proof container.

Inside was only a single, thick, translucent, crystalline tome. When he opened it up, the words actually floated above the pages. As he read the holographic writing, Michael sighed and complained "I kinda expected to just, magically learn the shit

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instantaneously. Well, whatever... If this was a few years ago, I probably wouldn't even bother, but I've been pretty addicted to reading lately anyway. Of course, this is more like a textbook than a fiction, but fuck it, magic is awesome."

The title of the skill-book was "Introduction to the Arcane Arts" and judging from the index, he could tell that there were at least a dozen spells. Half of them were passives and the others were active; although, there was nothing too extreme, just basic techniques.

After shoving it into bag-slot two, he muttered "Hmmm~, ah, there it is." as he opened up the 'Contacts' list. His Companions were automatically added, so he wasn't sure if it was possible, but in the 'Acquaintances' section, Goliath's name was written there.

Michael smiled and said "It's been fun, but I gotta go feed my cat-girl now. I'll be back though, and hopefully with something a bit more filling." He wanted to save some things for later, so he didn't take out the rest of his hoarded carcasses.

Goliath chuckled and told him "It's been a pleasure doing business with you... Please, come again, as soon as possible. I still have plenty of skill-books left, so don't forget about me."

When Inari realized that her Companion wanted to leave, she quickly walked over to the huge, bright-blue root, and pressed her paws against it. When Michael touched her fur, the two of them were enveloped in an azure aura and teleported away.

Once they were back on the surface, the two of them slowly walked eastward. On the way, they only encountered a single, rank-G, level-9 'Bengal Tiger.'

After two Arcane Orb strikes, it was dead and the frightened vixen instinctively devoured its mana-core. Nothing else dared to approach the level-8 Human, regardless of the relatively weak Quad-Tailed Nature-Fox who was trotting next to him.

They weren't exactly rushing back to the waterfall, and leisurely walked: Michael was singing loudly the entire time. When Inari found a raspberry-bush, they stayed there for almost an hour picking and eating them all.

He couldn't help but wonder "Is this jungle actually artificial?" because there were so many different species of animals and plants: Most of which, typically lived in different environments. However, the planet that he was on wasn't Earth, but rather named after the Goddess Arcana, whom was said to have created everything. After urinating and

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defecating, the two of them still needed another thirty minutes before they managed to reach that familiar riverbank, with the gigantic waterfall in the distance.

Michael wasn't even singing at that point, but making deafening "Awooo~" noises in concert with the giant fox. Since the vixen wouldn't stop crying, barking and trying to copy him, he couldn't even remember the lyrics anymore; he was forced to just howl out the notes, and try to tune-out the annoying kit.

By the time they finally arrived, Sarah screamed "Shut the fuck up!" while throwing a rock at his face. Ironically, since his Defense Rating was so high that he couldn't possibly be seriously wounded by such a weak attack, it wasn't even prevented.

Fortunately, with his improved reaction-speed from having seven Agility-points, he was actually able to catch it with his right hand. Elina and herself had been sleeping soundly, until the noisy duo started getting closer.

What none of them realized, was that they hadn't been alone, and if not for all of that howling, the two of them would have certainly been killed. Above the water, the New Moon was high in the sky; although, compared to the illumination from the plants and insects, it wasn't quite that radiant.

Sarah complained "Do you have any idea how bored I was, listening to this asshole, bitch and whine about how shitty her fucking life is?!" Then the two of them noticed the gigantic, bio-luminescent, bright-green fox.

The worm-girl immediately equipped her Obsidian Wakizashi, but Elina just exclaimed "Aw~! It's so~ adorable!" as she stood up and ran over to the massive kit. Inari happily jumped around the relatively small Priestess, while barking and rubbing against her.

When Sarah sighed and withdrew the blade back into her palm, Michael smirked and asked "Oi, Brat, what did you just do?" It was obviously a lot different than the typical instantaneous storage.

She snickered and then glared at him, while holding out her right hand, and bragging "You haven't even figured out how to Unequip yet? It only took me five seconds after receiving my Soulbound weapon."

After pulling out his glowing crystal-ball, he tried to do something similar, but rather than being absorbed into his body, it simply started hovering behind his head. There was still



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a message which told him “Throwing-Weapon has been Unequipped.” and when he reached back to touch it, his hand just passed right through.

Michael muttered “It seems like each Element has their own way of doing things...” Then he turned to Elina, who was scratching the giant vixen’s stomach, and announced “Little Kitty-Cat, it’s finally time for you to evolve!”

The Priestess stopped playing with Inari, and looked up at the smirking man, who suddenly made a glowing, pure-white pearl, appear in the palm of his right hand. She immediately used her ‘Scan’ to identify the item, and asked “How did the two of you manage to kill a level-nine, rank-F, Elite?”

He snickered and explained “Ah, it was a pain in the ass... The little puppy was insta-killed in the very beginning, so I had to solo it. Of course, I died three fucking times, but in the end, I won.” as he handed her the mana-core.

Elina bit her lip and furrowed her brows, before staring intently at the tiny bead, pressed between her index finger and thumb. Then Sarah started laughing hysterically, and told her “Don’t worry, evolving doesn’t hurt...”

At that, Michael sighed and said “No, it’ll probably suck pretty badly. Like appendicitis, combined with menstruation, having your eyes gouged out, and being anally penetrated by a horse... All of those things would most likely be more pleasant, but ya don’t really get anything outta them. Well, unless you’re really into that kinda shit.”

## Chapter 41: Evolving a Cat-Girl

She hesitated for a few seconds, but eventually Elina put the tiny bead in her mouth and slowly swallowed. Her cat-like eyes began glowing with a golden luster, as her brownish-tan skin started turning a white so pure that it seemed extremely unnatural.

The Priestess' whole body began contorting uncontrollably, as she released a terrible scream, falling into Michael's arms. However, he immediately shouted "Ow, shit, damn it!" as he dropped her onto the dirt and rocks.

He had third degree burns all over his chest, abdomen, forearms and hands. Even his health had dropped to 35/52.5.

All of the cat-girl's bones and muscles were rippling, transforming, and growing slightly larger, but her body was also becoming slimmer. Her Strength wasn't changing and neither was her Vitality or Endurance; rather than being heavier, her total weight was decreasing rapidly.

Her short and curly black-hair lengthened dramatically, and became wavy, with white stripes suddenly appearing. The fur on her ears and tail was the same, but Michael was a little disappointed by the changes.

Sarah complained "The hell... Is that it? I turn into fucking worm-monster, and this bitch just glows a bit, grows taller, and has perkier tits..."

When the transformation finally ended, twenty minutes later, Elina lost consciousness. All of her Stamina and Mana was completely drained, but her HP was still full.

Then a message popped up for Michael: "You have successfully evolved Elina Jacobs into a White-Tiger Cat-Tribe. Base stats have increased based on your Luck and the 'White Bengal Tiger of Light' that the mana---core originally belonged to: Aura +2, Charisma +3, Agility +2."

### [Companion Information]

Name: Elina

Titles: Of the Undying Light

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Level: 7  
Experience: 54/70  
Age: Adult  
Race: White-Tiger Cat-Tribe  
Rank: F  
Class: Priestess of Light  
Specialization: Healing  
Profession: Enchanter Level 3]

[Stats

Health: 25/25  
Mana: 30/30  
Stamina: 10/10  
Mana Regen per minute: 40  
Health Regen per hour: 30

Strength: 1  
Vitality: 2(+1)  
Endurance: 2  
Dexterity: 2  
Agility: 4  
Intelligence: 5(+1)  
Wisdom: 3(+1)  
Perception: 2  
Charisma: 4

Willpower: 6  
Luck: 5  
Aura: 3

Attack Power: 5  
Defense Rating: 1(+1)]

[Passives

Blessing of Good Health Level 3: Resists Level-3 infectious diseases, illnesses and curses. Effectiveness will automatically double at the expense of mana, when exposed to Level-4 or higher infectious diseases, illnesses or curses.

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Light Affinity Level 6: Mana and Health recovery increases dramatically when exposed to Sunlight and Moonlight. Increases healing done to allies with the Light Affinity by 60%.

Holy Light Level 3: All healing spells cost 15% less, and healing done is increased by 30%, when exposed to Sunlight or Moonlight.]

Michael started laughing hysterically, then turned to the disgruntled worm-girl and explained “It’s because of Luck! When you stole the mana-core from me and took it on your own, you weren’t my Companion at the time, and so you had to rely on your own shitty three points of Luck. Hell, you’re probably what happens when a person fails at evolving! Hahahaha~, don’t worry, I still think you’re adorable...”

The little Shadow just sighed dramatically and said “Whatever, appearances aren’t important, all that matters is power; everything else is just a meaningless distraction. Not being able to see was the only problem that I had with this fucking body, otherwise it’s actually pretty damn useful. This tail can eat, shit, drink, and even be used as a weapon, so I’m thankful... not to you, you’re a cunt, but to Umbra.”

He snickered and told her “Well, your Goddess must really love you, cause if we had never met, you’d be zombie-food right about now. Plus, most people probably wouldn’t be able to put up with your bitchy attitude. Anyway, you can go back to sleep now, I’ll stay up and make sure that no slimes try to eat you.”

Sarah gazed into his glowing-red eyes and asked “What I still can’t understand... is what the fuck you’re gaining from this? It’s pretty obvious that you don’t actually need the two of us. If it’s about sex, then why the hell would you pick a Priestess, and someone like me?”

Michael reached down and picked up Elina and then easily carried her over to the cougar-pelt that she had been sleeping on before. Inari was playing around in the water as he replied “Hehe~, you’re so short-sighted. First of all, I wasn’t kidding when I said that I needed something to masturbate to, but I’m not a slut... I’ve only ever had one girlfriend, and that was a long time ago, so I consider myself a ‘Re-Virgin.’ That’s basically the point where a person can’t even remember what sex feels like anymore, and has given up on romantic relationships. Yeah, I know, pretty fucking depressing, right?”

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“Anyway, that’s not as important as the fact that you’re a stealthy melee DPS, and she’s an OP healing Priestess. Sure, at the moment, I can solo things relatively easily... Okay, I still die way too often, but that’s beside the point. In the future, I’ll probably end up mostly Tanking, though I can probably fill in for whatever were lacking at the time. The giant fox, I have no idea what she’s gonna be, but that isn’t really a big deal at the moment. You claim to crave power... Well, I’m planning on beating all the endgame content. Obviously, that means I’m gonna need a full group of rank-SSS, ridiculously high-leveled Companions, and hopefully it’s possible to become World Bosses.”

Hearing all of that, Sarah finally showed a surprised reaction. She glared at him with her completely pitch-black eyes and asked “Then what? After we become the most powerful beings in this world aside from the Goddesses, what the fuck do we do then?”

He took a deep breath, looked up at the Moon, and sighed dramatically. Then he told her “Who knows? Maybe they’ll make an expansion? We could probably re-roll somehow, or maybe there are other planets in this solar system that we can explore? Anyway, the most important thing in life, is to enjoy yourself. I can promise you this: Even if I live for an eternity, I’ll still find plenty of things to do.”

The worm-girl smirked and said “I have no fuckin clue what you’re talkin about, but whatever, I just ran out of shits to give. Here, take these... I don’t wanna end up filling my damn bag-space with mana-cores, and I sure as hell ain’t gonna be dumb enough to take another one of these. If you find a Darkness Affinity rank-E core, that’s a different story, but I’m just gonna train normally.”

Michael grabbed the single black and five white beads from her palm; then immediately used two of the rank-G, level-ten mana-cores to increase both of his Companions’ bag-slots by one. After that he sacrificed the Stealthy Boa-Constrictor’s core, and gave Sarah a third slot.

After that he was able to store the other three white beads into his fifth inventory-space. The slimy red-skinned Goblin-Woman smiled at the messages she received, but she didn’t thank him.

Sarah turned around and walked towards a massive vine-covered boulder, which was half submerged in the shallow water, and then ‘Shadow-Stepped’ onto it. When she sat down, her pitch-black eyes closed tightly, and an ominous darkness started cloaking her whole body.

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It wasn't a spell, but merely her aura leaking out slightly and polluting the pure mana that was in her surroundings. As Michael was about to open his mouth, she yelled "Don't you fucking sing!"

He sighed and stored his blood-soaked kilt, boots and belt in his bag, before wading into the water and using a bar of orange soap to furiously scrub his entire body. By the time that he was finally done taking his 'bath,' Inari was laying on the riverbed, next to the sleeping cat-girl.

The tiger-pelt that he had placed down in the morning, was still coated with a thick layer of slime-juice, so he wasn't planning on ever using that again. Michael decided to turn one of the other level-six Bengal Tiger corpses into a fur that he could lay on.

However, rather than placing it near the soaking wet, giant fox and the unconscious Priestess, he chose the spot closest to the 'Meditating' Bloodworm-Goblin. They were still separated by a few meters of height, and he was on the shore, while that boulder was sitting in the slightly deep water, but Sarah still opened her eyes to glare at him.

After smirking at her, he laid on his back, while withdrawing "Introduction to the Arcane Arts" and opening it. Then he grumbled "Nah, I need to masturbate first." switching into his wisp-form and hovering over to the unconscious cat-girl.

The irritated 'Shadow' watched him for a few minutes, before closing her eyes again and making her filthy leather armor disappear into her inventory. Noticing that, Michael asked "Can you actually see my astral body?"

Sarah stared at the pitch-black orb that floated uncomfortably close to her, and told him "I've lived most of my life in a shitty village, filled with ugly-ass Goblin nudists... I honestly don't care if you see me naked, but just, shut up! Stop talking to yourself, and let me fucking Meditate!"

As he listened to all the howling, chirping, cawing, roaring, and all kinds of other noises, he asked "Okay then... do you know any other yoga positions? Never-mind, I'll just go inside of the boulder and look up from there."

## Chapter 42: Introduction to the Arcane Arts

“Introduction to the Arcane Arts” wasn’t a particularly rare or expensive skill-book... at least not when Goliath acquired it. However, when the Academy of Arcana was destroyed by a certain gigantic snapping turtle, things changed.

If Michael brought the tome to the Universal College of Magic, he could receive a rather sizable reward. Although, that would require him to travel over a thousand miles to the northeast, to the United Elven States.

On the first page was an index which listed the volumes from first to last: Communing with Arcana, Mana-Core Forming, Cultivating Aura, Vocal Magic, Ocular Spells, Physical Enhancement, Electrical Manipulation, Telepathic Communication, Mental Fortitude, Illusory Combat, Telekinetic Training, and Transcendence.

While the crystalline object was shaped like a small book, it actually contained over a hundred and twenty chapters: Each of those were at least ten-thousand words a piece. It was a guide, meant to last from when a child first learned how to read, all the way until they managed to evolve to rank-F through training... thirty years after they started practicing.

With such a ridiculous time requirement, it wasn’t surprising that Humans and other short-lived races rarely ever evolved more than once or twice in their lives. As he was skimming through the first volume, Michael muttered “Holy shit, this is all just to get the Arcane Affinity...”

Skipping past Mana-Core Forming, he started with what was quite possibly the most important part of the whole skill-book. Most spells, regardless of their Element, required the Aura stat to either increase range, potency, effectiveness, or pure power.

However, each affinity had a series of methods to slowly and quickly gain Aura-points. For basic Meditation, it was basically the same as what Sarah was doing; a person could take a number of different poses, and then concentrate on drawing mana into their bodies, breathing it out, and back in again.

That particular technique mainly focused on the Wisdom and Intelligence stats, but Endurance, Vitality, Perception, and Willpower would each play a part as well. Luck was the most important factor though, because it determined when ‘breakthroughs’

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would occur; that was essentially when the actual Aura-points would be acquired and how many of them could be earned at a time.

Nothing happened to Michael, even after he read about Meditation for nearly an hour, but once he started learning about the second method, a message popped-up: “Arcana has challenged you to a game. Would you like to play: Chess, Checkers, Go, or Shogi.”

After making his choice, an illusory, black and white checkered board appeared a few meters away from his face. The moment that she felt that enormous presence, Sarah opened her eyes and stared at the naked man, who was just laying on his back with a crystalline book in his hands.

Then she noticed a strange square object that suddenly appeared in front of him. Michael causally said “I always pick red, but you can go first kid.”

She would normally yell at him to be quiet, but even Sarah wasn’t audacious enough to make a sound in front of a ‘divine’ entity. Even though, all she could see was a very vague and blurry outline, there was certainly a humanoid figure floating only a few meters away from her.

A gentle and melodic female voice whispered “Very well...” It was unlike anything that the worm-girl had ever heard before, and she instinctively recognized it as a ‘Goddess.’

Michael snickered as he quickly made moves without any planning or strategy, and his opponent played in a similar manner. After five minutes, the game was already halfway over, and they seemed relatively evenly matched.

It was at that time that the naked man asked “Are you letting me win? Cause my Checkers skills definitely aren’t that great... Actually, I don’t even remember the last time I played a board game. Hmmm~, should I call you Kana or just Arcana? No offense, but I’m not really into the whole ‘Goddesses’ thing.”

The illusory figure smirked and murmured “This Avatar was created with Intelligence and Wisdom that are equivalent to your own. I have had many names over the eons, address me however you wish, within reason.”

He smiled and said “Well, that makes a bit more sense... Otherwise, I doubt that I would have much of a chance at any kinda game. I’m pretty amazing at some things, but I’m only mediocre at Checkers, and that’s among Humans.”



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She giggled and whispered “It’s still interesting, with the limitations I’m currently under, I don’t know if I can win. The game would be meaningless if I couldn’t lose.”

Michael sighed and told her “Well, an easy victory is always better than a hard-fought defeat. For me, winning is always a lot more fun than losing.”

The illusory, nearly transparent woman appeared to be Human, but with long, elven ears; she wasn’t wearing any clothes, but all of her features were blurry and indistinct. Hair could be seen to some extent, though it was colorless and seemed to extend for miles, up into the sky.

After another five minutes the game was finally over, and Michael won rather unceremoniously. At her loss, Arcana simply giggled and murmured “Congratulations... I can play with you again in twenty-four hours. Oyasumi Nasai...”

He smiled at her and said “Buenas noches~” as the checkered board and the illusory Avatar vanished abruptly.

After a few seconds Sarah yelled “What the fucking hell was that shit?!” If Elina had been awake, her reaction probably would have been far more dramatic.

Michael snickered and nonchalantly explained “It was one of the training methods in this book. Basically, Arcana likes to play games, and if you manage to win... Well, the reward is kinda obvious.”

A little notification told him “Aura has increased by four points.” The amount gained was based on his Intelligence stat, so the higher it was, the better.

She asked him “Do you have one for Darkness Affinity?” He was actually a little surprised at how deadly serious she was.

After smirking, a message popped-up before her eyes: “Quest Shared: Goliath the Devourer has been starving for over a thousand years; although he won’t die, the hunger has turned the ancient Raid Boss, into a docile, but desperate magical--beast. He has accumulated an extraordinary amount of wealth over his lifetime, yet he would sacrifice it all, in order to finally sate his appetite. Rewards will depend on the quality and quantity of the meal.”

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Then he told her “It should be marked on your map, but you’ll need to go with the puppy: She’s the only one of us who can take you there.” Michael sat-up and pulled out two pearly-white beads, and a dark-red one, calling out “Inari! Wake up, it’s time to eat!”

The sleepy fox immediately smelled the scent of those mana-cores and opened her eyes, darting across the riverbank and quickly devouring them without hesitation. Her bright-green body suddenly began glowing with a blinding light, and her status-screen appears.

[Companion Information

Name: Inari  
Titles: The Feeder  
Level: 6  
Experience: 0/60  
Age: Child  
Race: Quad-Tailed Nature-Fox  
Rank: E  
Class: None  
Specialization: None  
Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

Health: 40/40  
Mana: 20/20  
Stamina: 20/20  
Mana Regen per minute: 20  
Health Regen per hour: 40  
Strength: 4.5  
Vitality: 4  
Endurance: 4  
Dexterity: 1  
Agility: 10  
Intelligence: 4  
Wisdom: 2  
Perception: 4  
Charisma: 1

Willpower: 3

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Luck: 3

Aura: 5.5

Attack Rating: 12.5

Defense Rating: 2]

For the first time he finally noticed a dramatic change from altering stats. When he placed the three points into Agility, Inari's body began rapidly shrinking, condensing down to from the size of a black-bear, until she appeared more like a very large wolf.

Of course, aside from the stature, she still looked like a fox-kit, but a lot less intimidating. Michael smiled and said "Aww~ so cute~; okay Inari, go play with Sarah for a while."

As he was speaking, the naked girl teleported next to him and had a terrifying fang-filled grin, as she slid her slimy worm-like tail from his left leg, all the way up to his face. He complained "Now I'm gonna have to masturbate and take another bath before I go to sleep..."

After that, a set of crude leather armor appeared on her body and she was about to leave, but Michael yelled "Wait! Don't go yet!"

Sarah frowned and slid the mouth of her tail onto a certain part of his anatomy, and he sighed dramatically, while explaining "I wasn't asking for a worm-job, though it definitely does feel as disgusting and kinky as I always imagined..." Hearing that, she immediately stopped and he continued "If you head out in that shitty gear, you're definitely gonna die the instant anything manages to hit you. Hell, it doesn't even increase your stats."

As Michael removed mana-cores from five of the level-nine, rank-G Bengal Tigers he had collected, he immediately fed four of them to Inari. Then he turned those carcasses into pelts, and used them to create a set of fur armor.

It all happened so quickly, that by the time Sarah asked "What the fuck are you doing?" he had already finished inputting the specifications. There was actually a feature that allowed him to set a target, and have the equipment be custom fit for that particular humanoid.

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He raised his left hand towards her, and a set of tiger-pelt clothing suddenly appeared. It was essentially just a pair of small boots, a relatively short skirt, and instead of a belt with pockets, it was meant to cover her almost nonexistent breasts.

Since she didn't have the 'Scan' ability, he used it for her and allowed her to see the description. "Pristine Novice Bengal Tiger Fur Armor: Grants the wearer six Defense Rating, and three Agility points. Made to fit a female Goblin very small breasts. Uncommon Quality, requires level nine to equip."

## Chapter 43: Sharing is Caring?

Michael sighed dramatically after reading the level-requirement, but Sarah asked him “Can you create backpacks? I’ll need this magical bag to keep all the gigantic fucking carcasses in, but we really do need some other ways to carry normal shit.”

It was something that he unlocked after reaching ‘Leatherworking Level 3’ but he hadn’t even considered making one. First, he took out the six Poor Quality leather strips from his inventory, and actually chose the ‘trash’ option for the first time.

They disappeared from his inventory space, and nothing else happened. Then he selected his last remaining level-six Bengal Tiger carcass; instead of turning it into a single pelt, it became five pieces of Uncommon Quality level-six, rank-G, leather.

From that, he only needed two of them to create a goblin-sized backpack. However, he was given a strange option, so he asked “What color do you want it to be?”

She sighed and told him “Just make it black.” thus a ‘Small Obsidian Backpack’ was created. After Michael handed it over to her, Sarah quickly placed her new armor inside, and finally stopped her leech-like tail from unconsciously attaching itself to a certain part of his body.

As she was leaving, he stored his Arcane skill-book back into bag-slot two and complained “I forgave her for murdering me, twice, let her evolve, gave her immortality, an overpowered farming quest, a new set of armor, and she can’t even bother to say ‘Thanks.’ Ugh, I’m gonna be really pissed if she laid eggs in my urethra...”

Inari just sat down next to him, and didn’t seem to understand what was going on, so Sarah eventually came back and glared at the naked Human. Michael gazed into Quad-Tailed Nature-Fox’s bright-blue eyes and channeled mana into his voice, whispering “Be a good girl and go with the bitchy worm-woman.” while scratching her neck with his left hand, and pointing with the other.

‘Enthrall’ properly activated, and his words were converted into instructions that the vixen could actually understand. She barked happily, then licked his face a few times before following after the irritated ‘Shadow.’

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Once they were finally gone, Michael sighed and immediately took a bath in the river, while satisfying his other needs. Then he finally laid down on the tiger-pelt bed, and promptly lost consciousness.

Fortunately or not, his wisp form was ejected from his body like every other time he had slept. However, instead of wandering off somewhere, he decided to stay close-by, and properly make sure that no slimes decided to eat himself or the cat-girl.

Since he had nothing better to do, he stared at Inari and Sarah's status-screens while they were off hunting. Time was accelerated dramatically for him, so in what seemed like a few seconds, the worm-girl killed something and received five experience points.

He was even able to 'Whisper' her, and say "Pick Perception, it's not good to rely on a ring for your sight. If for whatever reason, you lose it or get something better, you'll be fucked." Without responding, he saw that she did what he told her to.

Then time started moving quickly again, and Inari reached level-seven. Michael decided to raise her Intelligence by two and Wisdom by one.

At that point, he could tell that the two of them had finally reached the destination. By looking into Sarah's bag-slots, he could tell that she only encountered rank-G, level five to nine Bengal Tigers.

A message popped-up, and in an instant, the wisp had vanished, reappearing in the Forgotten Grotto, next to Sarah. The gigantic, bright-green snapping-turtle opened his eyes and asked "Michael... is that you? I see, so this pest was sent by you, huh?"

He didn't even glance at the little girl, just spoke to the illusory figure of a man, who was completely naked and standing between the 'Shadow' and the fox. After a moment of looking down at his strange, immaterial form, Michael sighed and answered "Of course, who else even knows you exist? Anyway, this brat is my Companion, so you can't eat her... but, she did come here to feed you."

Sarah complained "This giant asshole better give me a fucking book for this shit..." as she released a huge pile of ten 'Bengal Tiger' carcasses. The instant that they appeared, dozens of colossal tentacles erupted from the creature's beak, and quickly pulled all of the 'meat' into its mouth.

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Suddenly, the girl's body began glowing brightly, and a monotonous female voice announced "You have reached level-nine." She placed both points into Agility, without even waiting for advice.

[Companion Information

Name: Sarah  
Titles: The Tree-Hater  
Level: 9  
Experience: 47/90  
Age: Adult  
Race: Bloodworm-Goblin  
Rank: F  
Class: Shadow  
Specialization: Stealth, Melee Damage Dealer  
Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

Health: 30/30  
Mana: 20/20  
Stamina: 15/15

Mana Regen per minute: 30  
Health Regen per hour: 30  
Strength: 2  
Vitality: 3  
Endurance: 3  
Dexterity: 3(+1)  
Agility: 7(+1)  
Intelligence: 4  
Wisdom: 3  
Perception: 4(+2)  
Charisma: 2

Willpower: 5(+1)  
Luck: 3  
Aura: 1.5

Attack Rating: 10(+23)

Defense Rating: 1.5(+1)]

Goliath started laughing heartily, then bellowed “Hohoho, this monster prepared a much better meal than you did Immortal One... Don’t worry child, I always repay my debts. What kind of skill-book were you hoping for?”

Michael told him “The same kind you gave me, if you have it. Something Assassin-ish, focusing on the ways to train more efficiently in the Darkness Affinity. I assume you probably have a ton of shit like that, right?”

The massive turtle chuckled and said “Indeed, I do have something akin to what you’re looking for.” as a cluster of blue vines emerged from the green water, and carried a small treasure chest over to them.

After Sarah cautiously approached, she opened the water-logged container, and pulled out the ‘skill-book’ with a dissatisfied expression. Before she had the chance to complain, Goliath explained “There was once a mighty Guild of Assassins who used Necromancy and Diseases to massacre entire countries... Of course, they were only Humans in the end, so against me, they were easily devoured. Fortunately for you, I have a habit of hoarding trophies and other useless things to me... From what I understand, someone of the Darkness Affinity can get that thing to work. However, don’t do it here.”

She was still frowning, but just stored the pitch-black Human skull into her first bag-slot, then turned towards the exit. Once the fox and girl left, the giant turtle seemed a bit solemn, as he warned “Michael, you should be wary of that one...”

Before he could finish speaking, the pitch-black figure started laughing hysterically and then revealed “She’s already viciously murdered me twice already, ya know? Well, to be fair, I did kinda-sorta trick her into taking the mana-core of a Bloodworm... I mean, she was a Goblin before that, and not the ugly kind. Although, I still think she’s pretty cute. If you’re worried about her betraying me... I don’t really know how she could, at least there’s nothing she can do to truly ‘hurt’ me right now. Who knows, maybe she’ll trick me into falling in love with her, then turn out to be a total slut. Ah, I guess she could probably wait until I had children, and then kill them; that’d be pretty fucked up, but I wouldn’t really put it past her.”

Goliath finally started chuckling, then said “Maybe I should have warned her to be wary of you instead... Anyway, thank you for convincing her to bring me food. Remember, I



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have plenty of other little treasures stored in this vault; the better the meals, the greater I'll reward you and your Companions."

In an instant, Michael vanished from that cavern and appeared in his normal, black-ball form, floating above his unconscious body. In what seemed like moments, the Moon disappeared as the sky started to brighten; though, the jungle was mostly lit by the bioluminescent plants and animals, so it was difficult to tell.

Sarah and Inari didn't kill any magical-beasts on their way back, and with both of them having at least ten Agility points each, they arrived less than half an hour after he last saw them. The worm-girl had discarded her old crude-leather outfit, and was wearing considerably less clothing.

A short skirt, that allowed easy movement, small boots that were little more than shoes, plus a relatively thin belt that barely covered her breasts: All of which was orange and white, with black-stripes. Judging by appearances, it shouldn't have been nearly as effective as her previous armor, yet it not only gave her six times the Defense Rating, but also raised her Agility by three points.

After playing in the water for a few minutes, the tired fox laid down next to Michael's unconscious body and fell asleep. However, Sarah was still wide awake, since she had leveled-up less than a half-hour prior.

Noticing the ball of darkness that was hovering around her, she asked "What rank and level was that monster?" Although she didn't show it, facing such a ridiculously powerful being, she was actually terrified.

Michael snickered and answered "Only 'A' but he was a Raid Boss too... As for level, I'd say at least in the seventies or higher." She flinched, but didn't retort him, or continue to talk about that subject.

Sarah Shadow-Stepped onto the boulder that she had been using before, and sat cross-legged, before pulling out an obsidian skull from her bags. As she held the ice-cold object in her slimy red hands, she frowned and muttered "How the hell am I supposed to use this fucking thing?"

The wisp sighed and told her "I'd Scan it, but my body's still sleeping. I still need a few more hours before I can wake-up normally. Well, there's no point though, cause I'm pretty sure you just have to channel your mana into it."

As she began emanating an aura of Darkness, the eyes of the human skull suddenly started glowing with a bright-red light. Then they projected words onto her toned and slimy abs: “Shadowcraft and Necromancy.”

## Chapter 44: Searching for a New Home

Michael sighed and told her “Get down from the fucking boulder, you aren’t gonna be able to use it in this kinda environment. Hmmm~, you need to find a dark cave or

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something like that. Unfortunately, everything around here seems to be glowing all the damn time. Actually, we're all probably getting bombarded by lethal amounts of radiation... Well, at least that would have been the case in my original world."

She didn't even need to teleport, with so much Agility, she was able to easily jump more than ten meters and land next to the naked man's body. He couldn't help but ask "What are you lookin at me like that for?"

Sarah complained "Your face really pisses me off for some reason..." as she kneeled down next to him and pressed her mouth against his left eyelid.

When her inky tongue began trying to force its way inside, he yelled "Oi, what the fuck are you doing?!" Quickly waking up, Michael grabbed her face with his left hand and pushed her away, sending the girl tumbling a few meters into the shallow water.

The skull that she was holding had fallen into his other hand, but Sarah immediately teleported to him again and took it back. She complained "It's your own damn fault for turning me into this. I keep getting these urges..." placing the 'skill-book' back into her inventory.

After Shadow-Stepping, her clothing and skin was surprisingly dry, though still rather slimy. He sighed and grumbled "If you want sex, then fine, but no licking my eyeballs-"

Sarah interjected "I wanna strip your flesh off with my teeth, drink your blood, and suck the marrow from your bones..."

There was an awkward silence for a few seconds, before Michael said "That really turns me on for some strange reason, but anyway, we should go find a cave: not for sex. Actually, we should really start working on creating some kinda permanent shelter. This waterfall is beautiful, but it's not exactly safe. Ugh, it'd be so nice if we could just find some abandoned house and squat there for a while."

The worm-girl glared at him, while mentioning "When me and the dumb-ass were coming back to this place earlier, I did see something like that. Well, I've got no fucking clue if it's abandoned, but there was definitely a cabin... Here, I'll just show you on the map."

Since she hadn't actually approached the building, she only knew the general location, and it wasn't marked or named. Michael sighed and with a thought, made the unconscious Inari and Elina vanish and appear in his Companion-Storage.

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Then he looked at Sarah's filthy body and asked "Can you Unequip non-Soulbound items? I haven't tried it yet." That seemingly illusory glowing ball was still floating a few meters above and behind his head.

When she tried it, a message popped-up: "Unequipping this item will bind it to you." Without hesitation, she continued to actually absorb the clothing into her body.

Similar to her sword, the belt, skirt, and boots left a tiger-shaped tattoo on the center of her chest, right below her navel, and on her feet. Each of them were incredibly realistic, and would have required quite a bit of effort to create, if they had been drawn by hand.

Michael snickered and told her "Good, now~, the two of us are gonna have a nice~, long~, bath..." as he easily picked her up with both hands around her waist. He was amazed that her weight was so ridiculously low, even without the four points of Agility that she received from her sword and armor.

She complained "What's the point? We're just gonna get dirty again in a few minutes." though she didn't try to escape his grasp. While Sarah only weighed less than twenty pounds, the man's Strength was at the point where he would be able to lift ten times that in a similar manner: though it wouldn't have been nearly as effortless.

Once he was up to his chest in the water, he explained "First of all, because you're fucking filthy, and I can't believe you licked my goddamn eyeball; if I get little worms crawling around... ugh, let's just say, I'll be very angry if you give me any sort of weird STDs. Even if you have a ridiculously powerful immune system and probably won't get sick, it doesn't change the fact that you smell like shit, and if we're gonna be living together, you have to start caring a little bit more about cleanliness."

Then he proceeded to use a bar of orange soap to viciously scrub her tiny body, but she didn't make any effort to wash herself off or stop him. It was much like he was bathing a puppy: who didn't have any hair.

However, she suddenly started groaning as her skin was absorbing the foamy substance. Noticing that her Health was dropping slightly, Michael grumbled "Oh for fuck's sake..." and put the soap away, while dunking her underwater.

Using 'Telekinesis,' he caused a small whirlpool to quickly wash her off. Once she was completely clean, he asked "Now, don't you feel all sparkly and fresh?"

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Sarah frowned, while saying “Are you sure ya didn’t just want an excuse to rub your hands all over me?”

He snickered and told her “If you want, you can wash me off next...” but she just turned around and dove into the water, practicing her ‘Cutaneous Respiration.’

Once they were both relatively clean, Michael used ‘Telekinesis’ to remove most of the water from their bodies. Then they both equipped their tiger-fur armor and started walking to the northeast, towards that mysterious cabin in ‘Raphael’s Jungle.’

It had only been thirty-two hours since the Undead Legion of Wormwood began devouring and consuming the Goblin Empire. Perhaps if the Ogre Paragons or the Orcish War-Gods who ruled over the Goblin Empire had decided to fight, they may have been able to resist the invasion.

However, they immediately gathered all of their military powers and vast treasures, then escaped to the ‘Hellish Wasteland’ in the northeast. It was a place where Undead wouldn’t dare to tread, because it was the territory of the Demonic Phoenix of Light, Iris.

She was an ancient Chaotic magical-beast, similar to Wormwood and Helel: Rank-SSS and a World Boss, with a level that no one had ever been able to ‘Identify.’ Since she was constantly soaring the boundless skies, far above the endless white sands and rivers of lava, it was as if the sun was always brightly shining across the desert.

Of course, there were plenty of other powerful aerial creatures, fallen angels, and demonic monsters that roamed those lands. Thus, the Orcs and Ogres needed to travel through underground tunnels, making sure to destroy those pathways after they made it through to their destination: The Dwarven Republic.

Rather than heading straight towards the capital, they split into two armies of two-hundred thousand troops each, then captured a handful of the outlying cities. The flames of war between the New Goblin Empire and the Dwarven Republic were raging violently, and on the other side of the continent, even fiercer conflicts were taking place.

Helel’s return was welcomed by the Archangels and Cherubim on the surface, but underneath that facade, each of the weaker angelic beings were forging alliances and plotting her demise. Even if she was a rank-SSS, level-???, World Boss... she wasn’t invincible, or immortal; ageless, yes, but not indestructible.

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The peace that the Human Kingdoms had shared because of the Goblin Empire threat, was easily shattered once they no longer needed to band together. Talion may have been obliterated, but there were still four other countries, each of which had their own reasons for fighting the rest.

While every one of them primarily worshiped the Goddess of Light, they also had other allegiances. Their names were Ignis, Aeris, Terra and Aqua, after the Elements that they primarily focused on.

Luxia was a city-state, which was also known as the capital of the Human Alliance, but they wouldn't actually stop the four Kingdoms from slaughtering each-other. It wasn't that they didn't have the military might, but they simply didn't care, and typically viewed them as sacrilegious; not quite on the level of heretics, yet they still wouldn't mind if those countries wiped each-other out.

The Warbeast Tribes in the farthest, southwestern-most mountains, lakes, and forests, had always been on unfriendly terms with all the other races; even among themselves, there was plenty of strife. However, in such a time of conflict, chaos, and bloodshed, the Goddess of Nature awakened the World Tree 'Gaea.'

She was an ancient and incredibly powerful Treant, which rested for millennia on the border between the 'Forsaken Tundra' or 'South Pole' and the 'Warbeast Lands.' To the Dryads and Wood-Elves, the colossal entity was essentially the spokesperson for Naturae herself.

Gaea's appearance was indistinguishable from a pine-tree... Aside from the fact that she was literally seven-miles tall and the base of her trunk was over fifty-miles in diameter. Thus, it wasn't as if she opened her eyes or uprooted herself, but the awakening was certainly felt by almost every humanoid on entire continent; she only sent a short telepathic message, but it was enough to assemble a terrifying amount of military power.

"Mother Naturae asks all of her children to please, come to the Dryadic Capital of Eden."

## Arc 5: Buying a House

## Chapter 45: The MC Finally Finds a Town

“How the fuck is this a cabin?!” Michael complained as he used his wisp-form to scout out the mysterious house in the woods.

The building was five stories tall and extremely wide, with dozens mansions constructed around it. It was essentially a huge, red and black, stone-castle in the center of a small, self-sufficient town.

When he floated over the six-meter high palisade, “The Temple of Asura” popped-up on the mini-map. There were thousands of people wandering around within the walls, stores, inns, restaurants, even what he immediately recognized as casinos.

In fact, his first thought was “Is this some kinda resort?” because there were several large pools, what appeared to be spas, and almost everyone was wearing bathing-suits: it was mostly light armor. However, he found it a little odd that nearly everyone was rank-G, and between level-three and ten.

There were some children who were unranked, but there were even a handful of ‘Elites’ at rank ‘F’ and ‘E’ wandering around. He heard the sound of music playing from some of the buildings; at first he completely ignored it, but then realized “What the fuck... Are they having a death-metal concert?”

Indeed, there was a huge stage on the roof of the castle-like building, and a band of five were playing instruments, amplified and distorted by sound-magic, while a vocalist was screaming. He complained “Ugh, the drummer’s pretty good, but that guitarist... and the singer is completely outta key. Those dumb-asses are actually cheering for this shit?” as he floated closer.

Then he noticed that the audience wasn’t there for the band, there was a massive gladiatorial arena in front of the stage; a dozen or so men and women, using swords, magic, and even magical-beasts, were fighting to the death. Michael sighed as a beautiful red-scaled lizard-woman was impaled by a trident, then beheaded by a huge, beefy, male Ogre.

The scimitar wielding giant was shot in the back of the head by a flurry of explosive arrows, by a tall but skinny girl, who had huge black wings coming out of her back. Unfortunately, she was rammed by a giant boar, and promptly trampled to death, and the Goblin Beast Tamer who was riding it, was then stabbed in the face by a Dwarf Assassin.



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After leaving there, he wandered around a bit more, and found a different kind of arena. It was inside of one of the mansion-sized buildings, and there were two women, wrestling with each other naked.

At first, he just said “Ah, that’s pretty awesome...” and then the match went in an unexpected direction. The muscular Orc was put in a headlock by the busty Human, before having her neck snapped.

He muttered “They aren’t even going to have sex?” It was an unarmed, unclothed duel to the death, and upon killing her enemy, the red-haired woman’s stats increased slightly; however, the most important factor, was that her Chaos Affinity reached level-three.

After that, the Human exited the arena while dragging out the Orc’s corpse by the hair, and then two Wolf-Tribe men entered. Michael sighed and complained “What’s the point in being naked? If they aren’t gonna fuck, then it’s just awkward...”

It was his first time visiting anything larger than a village, since arriving in that world, so he didn’t exactly know what to expect. However, he was surprised to discover that there were no brothels or similar buildings; he did notice quite a few places that were extremely sketchy, but he eventually realized why.

Inside of the giant castle, there were many large rooms; screams, moans, crying, and yelling were constantly resounding throughout the structure. In a world without rape or slavery, people had all kinds of strange fetishes and desires.

He witnessed a whole slew of unspeakable and horrible scenes within that ‘Temple,’ but his reaction was “Asura was definitely a Hentai Mangaka before he or she came to this world. This whole damn place reminds me of a myriad of porn-sites and horror-movies... Apparently, bestiality is possible, so is necrophilia, and incest. I didn’t see any children though, so I guess pedophilia is a big no-no, but overall... this hellhole isn’t really that bad. Well, I’m definitely never physically going inside of that fucking cesspit, but at least it’s good masturbation-material.”

As Michael returned to his body, Sarah asked him “Where the hell did you go? Look, the house is over there.” She was pointing at a large log-cabin, which seemed abandoned; it was covered in vines and overgrowth, with unranked deer, foxes and raccoons wandering around outside.

After a few seconds, he said “Oh, yeah, that looks pretty good.” Then he complained “Ya know, this isn’t the place you showed me on the map...”

She retorted “I just saw one for the first time yesterday, what the fuck do you expect?” The Temple of Asura was a whole mile and a half to the north of their current location; on the open

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plains, it would actually be visible, but a rain-forest was much different. Not to mention the fact that without a magical map, it was impossible to navigate in 'Raphael's Jungle.'

Michael sighed as he walked towards the surprisingly well-maintained cabin. It actually had a second story, with a balcony and all of the windows seemed to be intact. The doors all seemed to be closed as well, so he sent out his wisp, to quickly scout through the building.

After passing through the wall, he heard a loud, feminine voice saying "You have discovered an unused Player-Home; would you like to purchase it for five-hundred gold coins?"

He was immediately forced back into his body and complained "Goddamn it! Who the fuck has five-hundred gold?! Shit... guess there's two options now."

Sarah obviously heard that as well, so she asked "Can't we just sell some more magical-beasts to that big-ass turtle-monster?" That was the first choice, and it would probably work, but he had reservations regarding that.

From the way that Goliath acted, he might not have actually had loads of gold coins laying around. Michael grumbled "I really hate dealing with people... but if we want to make a lot of money, ugh, we're gonna have to enter a town."

Hearing that, she glared at him and yelled "Where the hell are we gonna find one of those? We're in the middle of the fucking jungle!" He frowned and was about to send her into his Companion-storage, but decided against it.

In that 'Temple of Asura,' the strongest person that he had seen was an 'Elite' Dark-Elf Fire-Mage, who was rank-E and level-seventeen. However, the majority of the population was around level-five and rank-G, so he wasn't too worried about their chances.

Michael sighed and told her "Listen, I'm gonna take you to a really sketchy place, and if you wander off, I'll shove you into Companion-storage. I'm serious, we aren't going there to play around, just to make a bunch of money and get the fuck out... Also, I'm almost a hundred-percent certain, that we might end up having to kill a shit-ton of people."

She suddenly started grinning and giggled slightly, before saying "Heh, I forgot how much of a pussy you were." as a pitch-black wakizashi emerged from her right hand. Her expression became extremely seriously as she wielded the obsidian short-sword and asked "Are you gonna be able to actually kill someone?"

After smirking, his muscles visibly tightened and bulged, then he revealed his shiny white teeth, before answering "I'm pretty confident in my ability to slaughter assholes... Ah, that sounded

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weird. Anyway, yeah, it'll probably be fine. Actually, I was more worried about you wandering off and having sex with a bunch of strange men."

Sarah glared at him with her pitch-black eyes and complained "I might be a murderer and a thief, but I'm definitely not a slut. Besides, we've only known each-other for two fucking days, we aren't married, so why the hell do you care?"

He sighed and asked her "If I went around sleeping with a bunch of random whores, how would you feel about that?" She clenched the grip of her Obsidian Wakizashi and grit her fang-like teeth, while scowling at him.

Then she said "I'd probably slice their cunts open before you had the chance to shove your dick inside... I think I understand now. We might not be married, but we're definitely connected. It doesn't matter anyway; I don't plan on screwing anyone, and besides you, who would actually be attracted to me? Let's stop fucking around and just go there already!"

## Chapter 46: The Temple of Azura

There was once a time when hordes of tourists would come from all over the continent to indulge in all that the Temple of Asura had to offer. Unfortunately, the Order of Holy Light, among other similar organizations, banned gambling, sex outside of marriage, alcohol consumption, and even gladiatorial arenas.

Of course, there were still plenty of places like that, hidden in hard to reach places, and flourishing behind the scenes. Even in the holy capital Luxia, there was plenty of organized crime.

Prostitution in the most general sense, was disdained by the Goddesses themselves, so brothels and other similar facilities weren't allowed to exist. However, there were plenty of loopholes to be found.

The Temple of Asura's 'Pleasure and Pain Center' was one such place. In fact, Chaos herself was particularly amused by the concept, and actually rewarded the degenerates who participated in such unorthodox and strange sexual practices.

However, even though it wasn't much, there would usually be a hundred to a thousand tourists a day. After two days of not receiving a single visitor, many of the highest authorities in the town were extremely worried.

The total population was only twenty-thousand, and it was always decreasing at a rapid pace because of all the brutal death-matches, murders, and occasional outbreaks of lethal pathogens. Essentially, without a constantly stream of 'new-blood,' they would eventually die out.

At the huge steel gates, there were only two guards on duty. One was a brown-skinned giant woman, with terrible burn-scars all over her face, head, and the left side of her three-meter tall body; she was wearing a metallic-crimson chest-plate, gauntlets, boots, belt, and a chainmail-kilt. Sheathed on her back was a huge obsidian claymore, which was even longer than she was tall.

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While she was standing to one side, on the other was an eyeless old man, who was wearing a pitch-black robe and had long, white hair. Above their heads were the names 'Gatekeeper Alisa, Level-11 Ogre Warrior, Rank-F' and 'Carlos the Necrophiliac, Level-15 Human Shadow-Mage, Rank-G.'

There was only one entrance into the town, so the guards typically took turns standing outside and waiting for tourists to show up. It wasn't a particularly bad job, they just spent a lot of time accepting the entrance fees from visitors, so they needed to have enough power to avoid being robbed.

Alisa was actually sitting on a rather large boulder, and snoring loudly, while Carlos was leaning against the palisade and Meditating. Neither of them expected anyone to show up, and with all the noisy music playing behind them, they didn't notice the two people who were slowly approaching.

However, the old man's hearing was incredibly sharp to make up for his blindness, not to mention the fact that he could sense mana. He quickly stopped cultivating and used his 'Identify' skill to gather the proper information about the visitors.

"Michael the Immortal, Level-8 Human, Rank-F" and "Sarah, Level-9 Bloodworm-Goblin Shadow, Rank-F." While their descriptions didn't seem very intimidating to him, the aura that was emanating from the man was almost as potent as his own, and of the Arcane Affinity.

Carlos whispered "Lisa, wake up!" before sending a weak shadow-bolt into her bulky left tricep, immediately startling her awake.

The Ogress quickly stood-up and gazed down at the two tiny people in-front of her, both of them were wearing tiger-fur clothing, which wasn't particularly eye-catching. However, their weapons were a different matter; one had a glowing ball floating above his head, and the other was holding an obsidian short-sword in her right hand.

She bellowed "Welcome to the Temple of Asura! The entrance fee is one gold coin per person! If you don't have the money, then fuck off!" Hearing that, Michael sighed dramatically, and didn't seem particularly upset.

Sarah asked him "Can I kill these assholes?" while preparing to Shadow-Step, but he shook his head while placing his left hand on her right shoulder.

After a moment, the extremely nervous old man chuckled and said "Sorry friends, my partner is just a little cranky because she lost all her money gambling last night. The actual price is only one silver coin per person... but I'll let you enter for free if you can answer a question for me; has something happened in Carrabelle? I remember feeling a terrifying aura emanating from

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outside the Forbidden Forest... since then, there haven't been any visitors and people have been fairly concerned."

Michael snickered and told him "Ah, yeah, a shit-ton of big-ass bone-dragons and hordes of undead assholes came from the south and were going north. We were in Jacobstown at the time, and just barely made it into the jungle before most of em passed by. I'm gonna take a wild guess and say, ya probably won't get anyone coming from there for a very long time."

Alisa snarled at him and roared "You fucking lying piece of shit!" while lunging forward and punching towards the Human's face. Based on physical size, it would be common sense that the Ogress was far stronger than him, but her Strength stat was actually on par with his.

Her Endurance and Vitality were also close to Michael's, and she had a major advantage in weight and leverage. However, it wasn't the first time that he had ever fought with a person much larger than himself before; of course, maybe not that ridiculously tall and heavy.

He sighed while using his seven-points of Agility to easily move to the side of her fist, and then Equipped his Arcane Orb. The giantess only had sixty HP, so with a single tap of his ball, she was almost immediately killed.

Noticing that his partner was about to die, Carlos cast a spell called 'Shadow-Switch' on her. The massive woman was replaced by the six-foot tall, but lanky old man, who was expecting to die.

Fortunately for him, Michael had already Unequipped his Arcane Orb, and said "Sarah, please don't kill the sexy Ogre-girl; I'd prefer if we didn't have to break into the city. Oi, I answered the fuckin question, so let us inside already."

The beefy woman had an obsidian blade pressed against the left side of her neck, and the relatively tiny Bloodworm-Goblin was contemplating whether or not she should listen to her Companion. Carlos frowned and told him "Thank you for being merciful, and for informing me of the situation... but I'll give you some friendly advice; you shouldn't be so softhearted, especially not in a place like the Temple of Asura."

Alisa clenched her fists tightly and then roared "Open the gate!" As the giant steel barrier was slowly being raised, Sarah Shadow-Stepped next to Michael and glared at him.

He sighed and said "Thanks for the advice, corpse-fucker." while casually strolling into the town. The moment that the gate closed again, the Ogress walked over to the giant boulder, sat down, then started sobbing loudly.

Carlos muttered "I guess it's finally begun..." while vanishing in a puff of black smoke.

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The streets were relatively crowded, but not badly enough that the people were bumping into each-other. In fact, for the most part, everyone kept a certain distance apart. There were couples, groups of three to five, and parents with their children, but it was obvious that people were avoiding each-other.

Sarah complained “It’s so fucking noisy...” as she listened to the loud music coming from various buildings, and the general cheering, screaming, yelling and other sounds that rang-out.

Michael sighed dramatically, then told her “This way, the first thing we need to do is make some gold to start with.” There was a large and wide structure, which had the words ‘Auction House’ written above the entrance.

It was a fairly standard way to make money in most ‘MMORPGs’ that he had played. Rather than simply selling items to a store and receiving barely anything, it was usually best to auction them to other Players: though he was the only one in that world.

After entering, Sarah followed closely behind the relatively large Human, and was literally like his shadow. He walked up to the reception counter and asked “Excuse me, I would like to sell some mana-cores.” to the red-skinned Orcish man, who had bright-blue eyes.

The surprisingly thin Orc, with a thick, grey beard, glanced at him and said “Third door on the left.” Without hesitation, Michael quickly entered the room, along with the worm-girl.

It was a fairly small space, but there was already a fair-skinned, large breasted, blond-haired Cat-Tribe woman, wearing a white dress, sitting on a sofa-chair near the back-wall. He didn’t even bother to sit down on the filthy leather-couch, and told her “I’m here to auction off a mana-core.”

She lazily glanced up at him, with her dark-brown eyes and didn’t speak, but just silently waited for him to take them out. When a glowing-green bead suddenly appeared in his right hand, she immediately stood up, with her mouth slightly open.

The woman named ‘Yuki’ quickly furrowed her brows while asking him “How much do you wish to auction this for? Would you like to place a buy-out price as well?”

Michael thought for a moment, then said “What’s the going rate for rank-E, level-7, Elite, Nature-Treant cores?”

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She frowned and answered “There is none, at least in the past ten years, I’ve never seen any Elite, rank-E mana-cores. If it was me, I wouldn’t place a buy-out, and set the starting price at fifty gold coins.”

He smiled at her and nodded his head, while telling her “That’s fine, but how long will the auction last for? It would be nice if I had a time-frame to go on.”

Yuki told him “Generally, with an item this expensive, the longer you wait, the higher the price will rise. Obviously, as your representative, my cut would also be much higher... so if possible, three days to a week should be best.”

Sarah immediately complained “I thought you said we came here to make some quick gold?” while glaring at the startled cat-girl, with her pitch-black and ominous eyes.

However, Michael just handed the green-bead over, and explained “Ah, I wanted to get this outta the way first. Don’t worry... I think you’ll probably like the place we’re going next.” before laughing maniacally: frightening the Auctioneer.



## Chapter 47: Making Money

Between Michael and Sarah, they only had nineteen silver and fifty-two copper. Elina had more than a gold, but she was unconscious and in Companion-slot three.

As the two walked down the street, quite a few gazes fell onto them; most of which were aimed at the strange Bloodworm-Goblin, but others were drawn in by the surprisingly potent aura that was emanating from the relatively short Human. It wasn't that his Aura stat was absurdly high, just that he had no idea how to conceal it.

After a few minutes of wandering around, Michael finally found what he was looking for. It was a store called "Only Cores" which as the name suggested, only bought and sold mana-cores.

Sarah complained "Is this the place you were talking about?" It was true that she was rather obsessed with powerful mana-cores for most of her life... but that was before she realized how easy they were to obtain.

However, he just sighed and told her "Of course not, but I need to have a few gold to start-out with, or I won't have anything to gamble with." as he approached the counter. Not only was there a rather imposing Orcish man by the door, there were also three other physically imposing guards standing around the relatively large room.

Only a handful of customers were walking around and browsing the goods, but Michael frowned as he recognized the manager of the store. The old man who lacked eyes, immediately faced the two familiar auras and said "If it isn't The Immortal, are you here to buy or sell?"

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Glancing around and scanning the various mana-cores, it was easy to tell that most of them lacked an Affinity, were under level-five, and rank-G. Also, only half of them belonged to magical-beasts, while the rest were from humanoids.

A luminescent white-pearl appeared in the palm of Michael's hand, and when he placed it onto the counter, Carlos started grinning: exposing a mouth full of rotten, blackened teeth. The old man told him "I can give you five gold coins for it."

If he had decided to auction the rank-F, level-nine, Elite White Bengal Tiger's mana-core, he most likely could have gotten six or seven times that much. However, it would have taken a few days, and he didn't want to waste anymore time.

Michael nodded his head, and quickly accepted the payment, before leaving the store without actually speaking. The moment he emerged from the building, he took in a deep breath and yelled "Holy shit! That place smelled like a fuckin sewer! How the hell are you still fine?!"

The worm-girl shrugged and said "I'm pretty sure there were some rotting corpses in the back room... Well, I'm used to being around Goblins, so I guess I just learned to ignore it."

He sighed dramatically and then pointed across the street, at a gigantic three-story building. Then he revealed "That's the place where we're gonna make our fortune!"

It was called "Chaotica Casino" and guarding the entrance were two level-ten, rank-F Ogre Warriors. Sarah couldn't read the giant sign above the huge golden double-doors, but she just silently followed after him.

As they entered, he immediately walked towards one of the counters on the right. The old Human woman didn't say anything, and simply waited for him to place the five gold coins in front of her.

She quickly accepted them and pulled out a small crystalline card, which had the casino's logo on it, she said "When you wanna cash-out, come back here and return this to one of the cashiers."

Michael snickered and told her "Thank you very much." before finally entering into the main gambling hall. He sighed and complained "What's with all this magical technology? Ugh, they even have slots..."

However, his goal wasn't to play cards, roulette, or any of the other games that were spread about the room. When the two of them went up to the second floor, the atmosphere wasn't nearly as leisurely and calm.

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There was an incredibly loud metal concert playing on one end, and a rowdy bar on the other. Sarah yelled “Just what the fuck did we come here for anyway?!” as they continued up the stairs, to the third floor.

In the center of the room, there was a huge hexagonal platform, with an enchanted steel, chain-link cage surrounding it. There were at least a couple hundred spectators sitting on elevated benches, and inside of the ‘ring,’ two Orcish swordsmen were dueling with each-other.

Michael snickered and explained “Isn’t it obvious? We’re here to gamble!” as they walked towards a registration counter. A smirk appeared on the little girl’s face as she watched one of the two Orcs decapitate the other; then a wave of cheers erupted from the audience, followed by a decent amount of boos and angry shouts.

It was free to watch the matches, because the casino made plenty of money from the betting. However, they also earned a decent amount off of the deceased fighters corpses and mana-cores.

When he heard the explanation from the female-Goblin organizer, Michael complained “So basically, we get paid one gold per win, and if we lose, you get to keep our corpses and items. Well, whatever, it’s fine... Okay, sign us up for a 2v2 match, and I’d like to place a five-gold bet that we’ll win.”

The extremely small woman frowned and told him “Sorry sir, but we only have single combat here...”

Michael sighed and asked “Okay, then sign this little brat up for the first match and put me in the second. Can I place the five-gold on her? Or is there some rule against Companions betting on each-other?”

Hearing that, the Goblin smiled and said “That’s fine, but you should know... The next fight is against him.” while pointing towards the ring. In the ring was a huge, two-meter tall green-skinned man, with dark-red tattoo’s all over his scarred body, a giant iron claymore in each of his hands, and above his head was displayed “Garath the Decapitator, Level-12 Orc Berserker, rank-F.”

Sarah snickered as an obsidian blade emerged from her palm, then her pitch-black eyes glared at the organizer, before she sneered and disappeared in a puff of smoke. The headless corpse of the previously defeated challenger was still laying in the middle of the octagon, when the little tiger-fur clad worm-girl, teleported a few meters away from her opponent.

Using that spell dropped her mana down to 10/20, but it was rapidly regenerating. There were several betting booths, so within a few minutes, hundreds of people were able to place their bets.

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The odds were fifteen to one that Garath would win, but Michael was just smirking the entire time. He didn't even bother walking away from the organizer's counter and just 'Whispered' "Good luck, though I don't think you'll need it, hehe~."

Sarah smiled as she suddenly received a message: "New Quest: Gain ten successive victories in Chaotica Arena. Reward: One hundred experience-points and a piece of equipment."

Jeers such as "Oi Garath, kill that ugly bitch!" or "Ew, what the fuck is that thing?!" and "Be careful, she's a sneaky little monster!" resounded around the arena.

However, Michael channeled mana into his voice and roared "Shut the fuck up!" A combination of 'Deafening Noise' and 'Intimidation' was released on the entire audience, and a slew of debuffs were issued to nearly everyone in the room: especially the organizer, who was right next to him.

Only a handful of people who were over level-eight were able to resist the terrifying and painful shout. After a few moments, the announcer said "O-okay, everyone already knows Garath the Decapitator... but this unknown and obviously very strange-looking girl named Sarah will be his next opponent. Match start!"

The hulking Orc was only wearing a chainmail kilt, and some iron boots, his face had horrible blade-scars, and his left eye was actually completely white. With huge tusks sticking out of his mouth, he snarled and growled at his next prey.

After so many years as an adventurer, and then a pit-fighter, he wasn't foolish enough to let his guard down against a smaller opponent; especially not if she was obviously an assassin. The moment that she vanished in a puff of black smoke, he immediately turned around and used his left claymore to parry the small, obsidian blade, then swiftly swung the second one downward.

## Chapter 48: Gambling Is Only Fun When You Win

Garath was certain of his victory, because his claymore had fiercely penetrated into the girl's squirming, worm-like hair. She screamed in pain, as pitch-black blood sprayed out into his only working eye, but then he felt a strange numbness encompassing his entire body.

The massive Orc fell to his knees as dark-green liquid oozed out of the sides of his mouth. Behind his back, Sarah was holding the grip of her Obsidian Wakizashi with both hands, as she twisted the blade and severed his incredibly durable spinal-cord.

His health had dropped to 29/60 after receiving a huge critical strike. Throughout the whole room, people were booing and shouting, complaining because most of them had lost their money.

It took her a while, but eventually, Sarah managed to slowly saw his head off with her serrated blade. Michael was laughing hysterically as he happily received the seventy-five gold, plus the one coin that she earned for winning the fight.

Of course, it was all placed into the magical crystalline card, so he didn't actually receive any of the physical currency. He noticed that even though he didn't fight, he still received half of the twenty-four experience for killing Garath.

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However, when he was about to head into the ring, Sarah glared at him while whispering “I just got a Quest to win ten times in a row...”

He sighed and told her “Fine, but if you die, I’m gonna be really fucking pissed. Now that you’ve already shown-off, the odds will probably start tipping in your favor. Which means that I’ll barely be able to make anything even if you keep winning. I’m gonna go abuse my overpowered Luck at the gambling hall on the first floor; otherwise, I’ll just be soaking up your experience.”

After saying that, he glanced around the room and whispered “There aren’t any Elites, so you shouldn’t have too much trouble. Just be careful okay?” With obsidian blood leaking down her face, Sarah nodded slightly and then turned away from him, facing her next opponent.

Before even entering the town, Michael already knew what kind of places those casinos were. In fact, he had already guessed the true nature of that ‘Temple’ the moment he read the name ‘Asura.’

He casually walked down to the first floor and muttered “Let’s see... Blackjack is quick and easy, but Poker takes a bit more effort. Hmmm~, Roulette is kinda interesting... Unfortunately, with all the magic and mages, I’m not sure how any of these things can be safeguarded against cheaters.”

A tall blonde overheard him and chuckled, before approaching the shirtless Human. “Gabriel, Level-19 High-Elf Marksman, rank-E” was written above the extremely effeminate man’s head.

He was wearing a thin, dark-green t-shirt and loose, black pants: Each of which seemed to be made out of cotton. Across his back was an elaborately designed pale-golden longbow, and on his right hip was a quiver filled with arrows.

Gabriel casually explained “You don’t need to worry about cheating here. I wouldn’t recommend trying to either. I’ve seen what happens when people are foolish enough to try to go against the Goddess of Chaos. Everything depends on Luck.”

After looking around some more, Michael asked the two-meter tall Elf “Do you work for the casino?” Even if he wasn’t an Elite, that man was certainly the highest level person that he had seen since coming to that world.

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Shaking his head a few times, the long and straight blond hair waved back and forth; Gabriel told him “I heard rumors about this place in my village, and only arrived a few days ago. It doesn’t seem nearly as bad as the elders made it out to be. Well, the music is awful and if you aren’t very powerful, it would be hard to survive, but overall, it seems pretty nice so far.”

Michael sighed and whispered “You seem like a naive brat, so I’ll give you some advice. Go back home while you still can. Let’s just call it intuition, but I doubt that this town will exist in a week or so.”

Once he delivered that warning, the lightly bearded man walked towards the Blackjack table and sat down. However, the curious High-Elf followed after him and sat down to his left.

After placing the crystalline-card onto the table, it started glowing and seventy-six illusory gold coins appeared in front of him. Gabriel was shocked to see so much money, and couldn’t help but feel embarrassed as he looked at his thirteen gold.

The dark-skinned dwarven woman dealt out the cards to all five people who were playing; Michael smiled as he glanced at the Jack and Queen, before betting ten gold. A few of the other players called for a hit, but he didn’t bother and just waited.

To his left, the elven man had already lost, and was groaning. However, when the dealer ended up with nineteen, the smirking immortal had easily won ten gold.

What he didn’t expect was that he would actually receive a Quest: “Win ten games of Blackjack in a row. Reward: Fifty experience and a Soulbound item.”

Compared to fighting to the death in the arena, it seemed a lot quicker and easier, but in a way, it was also much more difficult of a challenge. Michael sighed and grumbled “Hopefully my Luck is able to get me through this...”

Meanwhile, upstairs, on the floor of the octagonal ring were five corpses; four of which belonged to Sarah’s opponents, the first was a decapitated Orc who had been there before she entered. Since her Companion left, she had killed a level-9, rank-G, Goblin Fire-Mage, a level-14, rank-F, Human Archer, and most recently, a huge, level-10, rank-E, Ogre Warrior.

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After each match, the 'referee' would cast a Nature spell called 'Rapid Regeneration' which would help her heal quickly. However, until she left the arena, only challengers were allowed to enter.

A mixture of different colored blood was splattered across the relatively large platform, with the bodies splayed about. That tiny girl, wielding an obsidian wakizashi and casually strolling around in the gore, was starting to become extremely intimidating.

Since she leveled up before fighting the Ogre, her Stamina was almost completely full as well. In order to boost her Attack Rating, she put both of her new stat-points into Strength, and noticed a huge difference in her overall power.

The next enemy wasn't a single person, but a Beast Tamer and his Companion. She had no way of 'Identifying' the strength of either of them, aside from taking a wild guess.

One was an elderly Dark-Dwarven man, who wore thick, black plate-mail and the other was a large red-scaled raptor, who was covered in scars. The short and stout man was wielding a mace and a tower-shield, so she knew that it wasn't going to be an easy battle.

If Michael was there, he would have warned her that the giant lizard was a level-15, rank-E, Elite, and the Dwarf was only level-10 and rank-G, but was also an Elite. Seeing those two enter into the ring, many of the spectators were booing and complaining "Get the fuck outta here you cheating bastard!" or other similar jeers.

In a match like that, two versus one was obviously an unfair advantage. It was obvious to everyone but the worm-girl that the organizers were getting annoyed by her winning streak and brought in one of their 'executioners' to remove her from the arena.

As soon as the fight began, she immediately Shadow-Stepped behind the man, attempting to stab him in the back of the neck. Unfortunately, his full-helm easily deflected her attack, and then he quickly smacked his tower-shield into her incredibly light body.

Sarah was sent flying backwards into the chain-link fence, where the ferocious raptor suddenly lunged at her, while sending out a torrent of flames from its mouth. Saving her mana, she used her unreasonably high Agility, combined with her recent increase in Strength, to leap five meters in the air, while performing a back-flip.



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Her bright-red worm-like tail smacked against the cage's ceiling and sent her flying downwards, gaining enough momentum to stab the tip of her blade straight through the Dwarf's iron shield. The man roared in pain as he swung his spiked steel-mace into her lower left-side ribs.

However, she was able to avoid most of the damage, and her health was still at 23/30. When she fell to the ground and tumbled for a moment, the raptor pounced towards her, and managed to sink its teeth into her left ankle,

Without much effort, her foot was completely severed, and she screamed as her body vanished in a puff of smoke, appearing to the right of the old man. Her short-sword was quickly thrust into his eye-socket, and when she pulled the blade out a moment later, he was already dead.

According to the rules, the fight should have ended then, with her victory. Unfortunately, that completely uninjured raptor was still in the ring, and neither the referee, organizers, nor any of the audience members were willing to fight against it: especially since it had gained the 'Enraged' buff.

The beast started to rapidly grow until it was so large that it was more like a tyrannosaurus-rex, than a raptor. Sarah was completely out of mana and already unable to use her left leg properly, so she just sighed and Unequipped her Obsidian Wakizashi, while complaining "This is fucking bullshit."

## Chapter 49: Moving On

“Quest Complete: Many people believe that the Goddess of Chaos governs the laws of Luck, but in fact, Luck is just an illusion created by Arcana’s favor. However, it takes more than simply being lucky to win a game, and if you did not comprehend the rules and how to play efficiently, you would not have been able to win ten hands of Blackjack in a row.”

Michael’s experience bar was at 75/80 the moment he received his first reward, and then suddenly an illusory cube suddenly coalesced in the palm of his open right hand. Gabriel, who was still sitting beside him regardless of the fact that he had lost all of his money several games ago, gasped as he ‘Scanned’ the object.

“Arcane Die: Increases wearer’s Wisdom by two and Defense Rating by three. Soulbound to Michael, and can only be utilized by him. Rare Quality, requires level--five.” It was one of the most elusive types of equipment that could be utilized: a ‘trinket.’

He immediately ‘Equipped’ it, and similar to the ‘Unequipped’ Arcane Orb, the tiny glowing cube began floating above and behind the man’s head. Not just Gabriel, but the dealer and the other people who had been watching were completely amazed at what they had just witnessed.

It wasn’t all that strange for veteran adventurers to receive ‘divine’ artifacts, bestowed by the Goddesses, for valiantly fighting against powerful monsters. However, the concept of ‘Quests’ was completely forgotten by most ‘NPCs,’ so from their perspective, Arcana had literally just given him a gift for no particular reason.

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On top of the fact that he had just won ten games of Blackjack in a row, and had three-hundred and fifty-two illusory gold coins sitting in-front of him, it was completely normal for people to envy him. At least they did until a few seconds later, when he started screaming while clenching both of his fists tightly and the skin on his face, neck, back and chest began charring.

A massive '-30' appeared above his head, as he roared "Fucking shit balls! Rahh~!" The aura that erupted from his body actually sent the little Goblin man to his right, flying a few meters across the room.

Gabriel yelled "Hey, are you okay?! What's happening to you?!" However, noticing the disturbance, several of the 'pit-bosses' who were already preparing to 'remove' Michael from the casino, quickly moved in for the kill.

Under the pretense of protecting the patrons, a bulky Ogre Warrior, wearing full steel-plate armor, ran over and swung down a massive club towards the Human's head. With his Health already dramatically reduced, it didn't take much for his skull to be cracked open and his body to fall limply to the ground.

Michael noticed that upon his death, all of the clothing that had become 'Soulbound,' instantly disappeared. The floating die and the ball vanished as well, and when he respawned, they materialized along with his body: on the other side of the Blackjack table. He was holding the Arcane Orb in his right hand as he yelled "You fucking piece of shit!"

The level-10, rank-F Ogre had an incredibly high Defense Rating, but when the glowing sphere bounced off of his chest-plate, a '-40' popped-up. Since the giant man couldn't feel any pain, or see the damage-number, he was still unable to grasp the situation.

He looked down and saw that the Human had certainly died, yet an exact replica had suddenly materialized, and was shouting at him. Michael threw the ball again, and then a third time, which finally caused the Ogre to fall limply to the ground: his body didn't even twitch.

A loud monotonous and feminine voice announced "You have reached level-nine." as the Human began glowing brightly. However, he didn't have time to invest any stat-points or even open his status-screen.

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Picking up his crystalline card, he tried to store it in his inventory and received a strange message: "Would you like to deposit three-hundred and fifty-two gold into your currency tab? Doing so will destroy the previous storage device."

Without thinking too deeply about it, he immediately agreed and the card vanished into thin air. Gabriel yelled "Michael, w-what just happened!?" and then followed after the fleeing man.

At least five or six Orcs, Ogres and Humans were chasing after the two of them, as they escaped onto the main-street. They were calling for the 'guards' to help them catch the two 'thieves,' but upon seeing a level-19, rank-E High-Elf, there was no one foolish enough to aid the pit-bosses.

They actually entered into a different casino, one which was on the other side of the giant caste, and Gabriel asked "Can you please talk to me now?"

Noticing that the flamboyant man was still following him around, Michael frowned and directly said "I'm sorry, but I'm not gay... Don't get me wrong though, you're definitely very beautiful. Unfortunately, I just can't get turned on by a guy's asshole; it just isn't the same."

Gabriel glared at him and yelled "What does that have to do with anything!?" They were standing in the entryway to a casino called 'Avarice.'

Michael casually walked up to the cashier and placed fifty gold coins on the counter, accepting a new crystalline card, which had a different logo on it. Then he headed towards the gambling hall, which had a slightly different vibe, and he could tell that it didn't seem nearly as sketchy.

After the blonde Elf pestered him for a few more seconds, he whispered "Stop freaking out. You saw my fucking title, right? I'm immortal... I can die, but just not permanently. Why are you following me anyway?"

The tall and lanky man was stunned when he finally realized "So that's what the title means..." Then he explained "They were chasing both of us, and I... I don't know, I figured that it would work out somehow if I followed you?"

Michael sighed dramatically and said "If you're trying to get me to give you some money, I won't. Besides, you're like ten levels above me for fuck's sake; just go into the jungle and hunt some magical-beasts."

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Gabriel frowned and asked him “Why did that guy kill you?” as the two of them sat down at a Poker table.

He shrugged and nonchalantly explained “It’s obviously because I won too much money. They would have waited until I tried to leave and then brought me to a back room, to do things quietly. However, since I was distracted and causing a commotion, they used that as an excuse to execute me publicly.”

After hearing that, the High-Elf was horrified, he had seen a handful of people who had been winning jackpots or doing well at the card-tables, that were probably murdered. Yet, he was naive enough to think that they were actually receiving some kind of special VIP treatment.

The moment that Michael won his first hand, he received another Quest: “Win ten games of Poker in a row. Reward: Fifty experience-points and a Soulbound item.” Unfortunately, Poker wasn’t nearly as reliant on Luck as Blackjack.

Gabriel asked him “If this is such a horrible place, then why are there so many people here?” The dealer had already started giving out the cards to everyone who had illusory coins in front of them.

Michael glared at the feminine man and then sent out his wisp-form to see through the Elf’s pants, before sighing dramatically and complaining “If you were a woman, I would probably be a lot less annoyed right now. Anyway, isn’t it obvious? People are fucking idiots! Doesn’t matter if it’s this world or the one I came from, race doesn’t matter either... It’s not even about Intelligence, because I’ve known plenty of really smart, but incredibly dumb assholes in my life.

“Why would anyone come to a place that’s obviously a death-trap, and then stay here complacently until they’re eventually killed? This whole damn town is called ‘The Temple of Asura.’ Chaos is in the name of half the stores, restaurants, and bars, so I’m gonna take a wild guess and say: this place is a literal hellhole.” After that he turned to the dealer and said “I’ll bet five.”

Gabriel had no idea what he was talking about, so he just muttered “I still don’t get it...” as he watched the strange Human gambling with huge sums of money. Michael won seven games in a row, but then lost the eighth, so he had to start back from the beginning.

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Compared to Blackjack, the rate at which he was earning gold was far slower, and he didn't draw the ire of the 'pit-bosses' who were scattered around the room. On the second try, he lost the fifth hand, and on the third attempt, he made it all the way until the tenth... but still lost.

Michael grumbled "Ugh, this is fucking bullshit." but as he stared at his accumulated one-hundred and sixty-seven coins, he couldn't help but smirk. He muttered "Hehe~, I finally made enough money." as he stood up and left with the crystalline currency-card: The 'beautiful' High-Elf continued to follow after him.

## Chapter 50: Cliffhanger

“Go home to your village and stop stalking me. I’ve told you twenty times already; I’m not gay, sorry... Also, I might have a girlfriend? Well, maybe not, I don’t fucking know; ugh, I’ve never been in a situation like this before!” Michael was going around to the different stores and buying necessities, such as: Spices, soaps, dried tea-leaves, rice, pasta, and even an acoustic guitar. He was amazed to discover how cheap everything was, and was able to buy everything for only two gold coins.

Gabriel had been following him the entire time and complained “You keep telling me to go away, and then you start ranting about your relationship problems... Besides that, I never said I was interested in you! Wait, before that, I’m married! I have three children and one of them is probably forty years older than you!”

Hearing that, Michael started laughing hysterically and asked “Did you adopt them? Or did you guys use surrogates? Actually, do Elves reproduce sexually, or can they just like... I don’t know, condense mana into an egg and create babies that way?”

The High-Elf sighed and muttered “Goddess, why do I need to put up with this jerk?” while gazing up at the darkening sky.

As the two of them were walking along the main-street, Michael snickered and said “So that’s how it is, huh? Let me guess... You received some kinda ‘divine’ oracle and were told to come here and find me, right? Hehe~, I wonder if they told you to look for me specifically, or if it was a bit more vague?”

Gabriel glared at him with his bright-green eyes and asked “You... How did you know that? Has Aeris spoken to you as well?” He had been given a Quest to investigate the Temple of Asura, and search for an ‘Immortal’ Human, but he had received it several days before his target had even entered ‘Raphael’s Jungle.’

Michael sighed and replied “I played Checkers with Arcana last night, but I’ve never spoken with any of the other ‘Goddesses’ before. Hmmm~, I wonder if this means that

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Windy is trying to recruit me? Well, I still haven't decided what my next Affinity will be... Anyway, if it's for a quest, then I can kinda understand your dilemma. I'm going 'home' now, so if you wanna tag along, then go ahead."

There was a huge difference between insulting a person's sexuality and disrespecting their religion. The High-Elf couldn't help but cringe as he heard his own Goddess being addressed in such a way, but given that he had never once, in the three hundred years of his life, been forced to kill another humanoid... he somehow managed to restrain his anger.

As the two of them left the town's gates, they began to somewhat silently tread southward. Eventually they managed to escape the chaotic noises of the Temple of Asura and only the sounds of animals and distant thunder could be heard.

At that time, Gabriel pulled out a small, animal-bone flute from the satchel on his left hip and started playing. It was an unfamiliar song to Michael, but not very complicated either, so he unconsciously began singing a harmony: no words, simply notes.

However, within moments, the two of them were surrounded by a dozen elves, whom were all wearing similar attire to the Marksman. All of the bowmen and women were aiming their weapons at the suspicious Human, as Gabriel immediately stopped playing the flute.

Michael sighed loudly, then made a horrible whistling noise, which was infused with mana, and nearly deafened most of the archers. Obviously, he was unable to kill all of the nearly level-twenty and rank-F or higher enemies, so to avoid capture... Several of the startled rangers accidentally loosed their arrows, and a series of numbers popped up above his head: '-17,' '-30,' '-26,' '-12.'

The instant his chest was riddled with arrows, the relatively short Human's health had been reduced to zero. Gabriel shouted "Why did you do that?!" both to the corpse that was laying next to him, and the four 'rookie' Marksmen, whom had each just killed a person for the first time.

Suddenly a familiar voice appeared in the High-Elf's mind: "Hehehe~, ya know, you coulda just invited me to go with you somewhere... but oh well, shit happens. Anyway~, I've got things to do. I'm serious though; go back to your village, because if you stay near me or that town, you're gonna wind up getting yourself killed. If Aeris wants me to go visit you guys, she'll give me a Quest sooner or later. Hasta luego~."



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As the invisible pitch-black wisp soared towards the south, Gabriel grimaced and reprimanded “The Grand-Matriarch commanded us to capture, not kill! Why were any of you even pointing your weapons at him in the first place?! He wasn’t even level-ten! Grrr~, now that it’s come to this, Talia! You fired one of those arrows, so it’s your turn next... I trust that you should be able to use, any means necessary, to capture him.”

The moment that she heard that, the two-meter tall, incredibly lithe, elven girl trembled and hesitantly replied “I don’t understand Father, isn’t he already dead?” She had large green eyes, and blonde-hair that was pulled back into a ponytail.

He sighed and answered “Of course not! He’s immortal, so obviously he can’t be killed! He kept warning me to stay away from the Temple of Asura, so it’s likely that he’s planning on returning there. I need you to enter the town; I’ll send you a ‘Wind-Whisper’ when he enters the gates. If you’re unable to ‘convince’ him to come with us willingly, then we’ll capture him as he leaves.”

Nearly a mile to the south of them, a tiger-fur wearing man materialized in front of a two-story log-cabin. Michael snickered and muttered “Finally... it took an entire day of gambling, but I’ve finally earned enough gold to buy my first house! Actually, now that I think about it, wasn’t that way too easy? Well, whatever; yes, I would like to purchase this property!”

The moment that he touched the silver doorknob, it suddenly unlocked and five-hundred gold was removed from his currency-tab. Then the whole ground began rumbling underneath his feet, as the entire building instantly vanished, leaving an empty plot of land behind.

A message popped-up: “You have acquired a Rank-G Player-Home. Please find a suitable location to place your house. The Player-Home can only be moved once every week, and all items, furniture and NPCs inside, can be stored along with it. Cost to upgrade: Two-thousand gold coins and one-hundred Level-10 or higher, Rank-F mana-cores.”

Michael snickered as he started walking towards the west, muttering “I really hope there won’t be any bills...” Perhaps if he decided to place it in a city or town, that might have been the case, but the Goddesses weren’t so petty that they would demand a property tax from him.

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After arriving at the base of the waterfall, he looked around at the winding river and searched for a space of relatively flat land. Unfortunately, there was only a few meters of stones and boulders between the lush jungle, and the raging rapids.

However, when he gazed at the top of the orangish-brown, eighty-meter high, sheer-cliff, Michael muttered “This definitely won’t end well.” In his original world, he was deathly afraid of heights, but it wasn’t a phobia; he simply didn’t want to fall to his death.

When free-climbing the cliff, he didn’t actually feel any fear at all. In fact, compared to fighting for his life against a gigantic white-tiger or running from hordes of undead, he didn’t even have an adrenaline rush.

With six Strength and seven Agility, he was able to scale the side of the waterfall in under ten minutes. When he made it to the top, he noticed that there was a huge area of flat-land on each side of the twenty-meter wide river.

There was even an orchard of apple, orange, pomegranate, and avocado trees on the opposite side of the river from him. He could see another cliff, less than three hundred meters away and there were a decent amount of relatively large cave-mouths.

Michael glanced around and without investigating further, he impatiently activated the ‘Place House’ feature. Suddenly watching a top-down view of the whole area, he could see an illusory version of the twenty by fifteen meter, two-story log-cabin.

As he moved the building subconsciously, it changed from red to green depending on if the ground was stable, or there was enough room. He quickly chose a spot that was thirty meters from the cliff and ten from the riverbank, then decided to have the ‘front’ of the house facing the the east, or towards the cliff.

There was a loud rumbling as a huge structure materialized in less than three seconds. The roofing was black and slanted at various steep angles, with several windows on the sides, and both the front and back had a small balcony on the second floor.

He couldn’t help but smirk as he gazed upon the first ‘real’ house that he had ever bought in his entire life. It wasn’t the largest or the nicest place that he had ever lived in, but for three people and a fox, it was a little overkill.

When he walked over to the door and opened it, he wasn’t even slightly surprised to find a completely empty room. There were no lights, so he needed to use his wisp-form to see properly.

## Chapter 51: Breaking In a New Home

On the first floor, there was a large living-room with a fireplace, a small bathroom, a decent-sized kitchen and dining-room, plus a staircase. Then on the second floor, there were two large bedrooms and two medium-sized unspecified-rooms.

Michael could tell what every room was supposed to be, because they were actually labeled on his mini-map. When he thought about how empty everything was, a message appeared: "Please select the room that you wish to furnish."

He immediately said "The bathroom" and was teleported to the small space on the first floor. An illusory shower, toilet, sink, along with a mirror and shelf had suddenly appeared; there was also a flat and round crystalline object on the ceiling, which was emitting white-light.

Over each object was a price-tag and description. Everything cost a combination of mana-cores and normal currency.

Fortunately, since it was technically a rank-G Player-Home, things were relatively cheap. On the other hand, he only had two gold and barely any mana-cores left.

After sighing dramatically, Michael muttered "Well, I guess it's time to let the Companions out..." as he entered his body and started walking upstairs. Even though it was nighttime, the brightly-glowing jungle-lights were still shining through the large bedroom windows, and he went out onto the western balcony to drop off the dog-sized Quad-Tailed Nature-Fox.

Regardless of her status as one of his Companions, she was still an 'outside' magical-beast. Inari was sleeping, so he quietly closed the sliding-glass door behind him, and then made a certain unconscious Priestess appear on the wooden floor.

If she was standing, the cat-girl would have been six-feet tall and was definitely a lot skinnier than before. All of the freckles on her face and body had disappeared, and her smooth, pure-white skin was actually radiating a decent amount of light.

She had already been unconscious for at least eight hours, so Michael wanted to wake her up before she became incontinent. If it was outside, then he wouldn't mind, but being in a house was much different: especially when he was the owner.

Kneeling down next to the girl's face, he yelled "Oi, wake up!" while lightly slapping both of her cheeks at the same time. There was no reaction, so he grabbed her furry black and white cat-ears, fondling them roughly.

Elina giggled while murmuring "Mmm~, be gentler..." as she placed her left hand on her chest and the right swiftly glided below her naval. She moaned quietly, and her robe suddenly vanished into a glowing tattoo between her disproportionately large breasts.

Michael stopped rubbing her ears and said "Are you awake? I don't wanna get in trouble for 'nonconsensually' massaging your furry parts..."

She lazily opened her brightly-shining golden cat-like eyes, and glanced at him for a moment, before swiftly stopping what she was doing. After looking around the room a few times, she asked "What happened? Where are we?"

He snickered as she yawned and stretched her entire body out, then explained "It's been a whole day since you evolved... but you've only been asleep for less than half that time. Long-story short, me and the little brat found this house, but then I needed money to buy it, and so we went to a town; she died in a death-match arena, and I won a ton of gold gambling. Anyway, you were definitely just masturbating, are you gonna pretend like that never happened?"

Elina blushed slightly and smirked, while peeking up his kilt for a few seconds. Then she turned over onto her stomach and laid her face on her forearms, while complaining "Let me sleep for a few more hours... I'm sure there's plenty of things you could be doing instead of staring at my naked body."

Her striped tail was slowly moving in various directions as she anxiously waited for him to leave. Michael snickered and said "If you want... never-mind. Heh~, as a Priestess of Light, you're probably not allowed to experience things like massages, right? Hmm~, it's weird, maybe this is caused by your increased Charisma... Normally, I would just complain about how sweaty you are, but, your scent is really fucking amazing right now."

She giggled and muttered "As long as it's just your hands..." before closing her eyes and nuzzling her face into her forearms. Starting at the shoulders, he began gently kneading her skin and muscles with his palms and thumbs, and even unconsciously channeling mana through his hands in small quantities.

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The Priestess moaned quietly, as he very slowly moved down her back, along her spine and ribs. Between the tactile sensation of running his fingers across her flesh, the pheromones, the sounds she was making, and the fact that he could clearly see her uncovered body, Michael was obviously extremely aroused.

However, when he finally reached her lower-back, he suddenly stopped and told her “Okay, that’s enough... I need to go masturbate. From now on, this is your bedroom by the way. I’ll be staying in the other one, as for Sarah... I think she might have to sleep on my balcony; at least until she learns to control her worm-parts properly.”

After that, Michael went into the room across the hall, Unequipped his clothing, and used his used his wisp-form to spy on the cat-girl, as she played with herself quietly. In less than two-minutes, she had finished her arduous task and was able to think clearly.

For a few more minutes she just laid on her back and stared out the window, into the stary night sky. Then she suddenly noticed something incredibly important was missing.

Elina quickly stood-up, ran to her door, opened it, then sprinted across the hall and charged into Michael’s room, while screaming “Where’s my key?!”

He yelled “Ah! Goddamn it! Ya couldn’t wait like five fucking seconds?!” as he quickly sat up but didn’t stop ‘massaging’ himself.

The furious Priestess completely ignored what he was saying and doing, as she ran over to him and shouted “Tell me what you did with my key!” as she started slapping his face, neck and shoulders with all of her minuscule Strength.

Michael didn’t even feel any pain from the ‘vicious’ attacks from the naked cat-girl, who was covered in her own juices, but he was still perturbed by her actions. Her hands were especially moist, and he complained “Oi, stop, cut it out! Damn it, stop rubbing your cum all over me! I don’t know what the fuck you’re talking about! Just let me finish and I’ll help you look for it, okay?!”

Hearing that, she yelled “Ah!” while jumping backwards, and slipping because of her sweaty feet. After falling on her tail, she screamed in pain and then started sobbing, while curling up in a ball.

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Seeing that nonsense, he grumbled “Shit, I need to hurry up before she starts freaking out again...” as he laid back down and continued where he left off. Ten minutes later, the cat-girl was still crying and he had finally ‘finished’ what he was doing.

Michael sighed, then muttered “Fuck my life; I’m in a world without tissues...” The various sticky fluids were covering his body, as he stood up and walked over to the weeping Priestess.

Then he told her “You have a Quest, right? Then just look at the damn map; it should be marked pretty clearly.”

Elina suddenly perked up and exclaimed “Oh yeah, I completely forgot about that!” She immediately ran over and opened the sliding-glass door, walked onto the balcony and gazed out at the seemingly endless expanse of multi-colored, bio-luminescent jungle.

After seeing the waterfall, she turned around and started sprinting through the empty bedroom, smacking into the naked man who had been walking towards her. Michael latched onto her shoulders and said “Wait, stop for a second. Even if you go down there, how the fuck are you gonna get back up? Honestly, regardless of how incredibly light you are now, I still think it’s a bad idea for you to go rock-climbing right now. Just calm down... I’ll go and get it for you. It’s marked on my map too, so it shouldn’t be hard to find. Plus, I kinda remember seeing a little rusty key laying next to you, but I didn’t really think it was important at the time.”

When she finally settled her emotions, the flustered Priestess looked down at him and nodded her head. Then she asked “Did you get shorter?” while tilting her head to the left, noticing the fairly large difference in their relative heights.

He sighed dramatically and muttered “When I reach level ten, I’m definitely gonna be taller than you...”

## Chapter 52: Shadowcraft Is Pretty Dark

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It only took Michael twenty minutes to jump down the waterfall, grab the key and then climb back up the cliff. When he reached the top, he saw that the naked Priestess was bathing in the shallow part of the river.

However, upon seeing the rusty piece of metal in his right hand, she quickly ran over to him and snatched it from his grasp. He grumbled “You’re fucking welcome...” as he walked past the ungrateful cat-girl and quickly started washing away all the dirt and grime in the rapidly flowing waters.

When she finally came over to thank him, he told her “Open up your bags screen; there should be a special Quest slot that you can place the key inside of.”

After listening to him, the key in her hands suddenly vanished, and she started giggling happily. Then she got into the water next to him, and spontaneously hugged him tightly, pressing her enormous breasts against his left shoulder in the process.

Michael complained “Seriously, I just masturbated like a half-hour ago; are you doing this just to piss me off? Damn it... How the hell am I ever gonna get anything accomplished with the two of you brats double-teaming me?”

Elina quickly moved back and frowned while saying “Sorry, I was just so excited that I forgot what I was doing. If I could, I would help you take care of that, but...”

He stopped her, by interjecting “It’s not a big deal, and I understand, kinda. I mean, until I came to this world, I had only ever been with a single girl before, and the two of us dated for like, three years. When we met, we were both super-virgins who had never even kissed another person before. Anyway, the point is, since that ended, it’s been years since the last time I had any kinda physical contact with another human-being. Of course, neither of you two are technically ‘Human,’ but that doesn’t really matter.”

After a few seconds of relative silence, she asked “Were the two of you in love?” Such relationships were obviously taboo in the Convent that she spent most of her adolescence and childhood in.

Michael smirked at the curious cat-girl, then nodded, answering “Yeah, we were... To be completely honest, before I had sex with her, I didn’t think that my feelings were anything more than lust. Yet, when we finally did it for the first time, I finally realized what love was.”

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She blinked a few times, while imploring him to continue, but then he explained “Basically, love is when you really wanna have sex with the person, even if you know it’ll only end without you being satisfied at all. Then you put up with all kinds of bullshit or abuse, get taken advantage of, over and over again, desperately try to fix everything that’s wrong with the person, only to get thrown away in the end. Well, actually, we broke up because it was a long distance relationship to start with, our sex-drives were completely incompatible, and once I managed to raise her self-esteem to a suitable level, I wasn’t good enough for her anymore.

“Hahaha~, but ya know, things worked out in the end, right? Aside from my parents and brother, I literally have no attachments to that world anymore! Well, I will definitely miss the internet, and video-games... plus loads of other random things that I can’t even remember at the moment.”

When he turned to face Elina, he realized that she was crying again. She muttered “That story was so depressing...”

He sighed and told her “How the hell is that sad? If you want my unprofessional opinion, you’re still upset about your brother and sister dying; which is completely normal, since it’s only been like, two days for you. Anyway, it’s time to resurrect the little monster...”

With a wave of his right hand, a small worm-girl suddenly appeared on the riverbank. The moment that she materialized, Sarah released a blood-curdling scream and spasmed on the ground for a few moments.

Michael yelled “Shut the fuck up!” as he emerged from the water and knelt down next to her. She was wearing a tiger-fur skirt, boots and a belt around her chest, while clutching a pitch-black curved short-blade; he couldn’t help but admit “Soulbound gear is so convenient.”

Then Sarah came back to her senses and saw the naked man, who was casually picking her body up. He told her “Congrats on finally getting a decent title and reaching level-ten... but you failed your quest.” as he glanced at her status-screen.

[Companion Information]

Name: Sarah  
Titles: The Tree-Hater, Of the Eternal Darkness  
Level: 10



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Experience: 46/100  
Age: Adult  
Race: Bloodworm-Goblin  
Rank: F  
Class: Shadow  
Specialization: Stealth, Melee Damage Dealer  
Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

Health: 30/30  
Mana: 20/20  
Stamina: 15/15

Mana Regen per minute: 30  
Health Regen per hour: 30  
Strength: 4  
Vitality: 3  
Endurance: 3  
Dexterity: 3(+1)  
Agility: 7(+4)  
Intelligence: 4  
Wisdom: 3  
Perception: 4(+2)  
Charisma: 2

Willpower: 8(+1)  
Luck: 6  
Aura: 1.5

Attack Rating: 20(+23)  
Defense Rating: 1.5(+6)]

Just like when Elina died and received a title, Sarah's Luck and Willpower also increased by three. She frowned and asked him "Did you get the money?" but then noticed the large, two-story log-cabin that he was carrying her towards.

Michael snickered and said "Of course I did... Anyway, I'm kinda excited to find out about what's inside that skull of yours. Oi, Meow-Meow, you coming or what?!" The cat-girl quickly got out of the water and followed after him.

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Sarah squirmed out of his arms and started walking on her own, opening the door and enjoying the almost complete darkness that was inside. Her typically completely obsidian eyes, suddenly developed deep-purple irises, which glowed faintly.

A pure-white robe materialized over Elina's naked body, and Michael made his own tiger-fur armor appear as well. However, when the Priestess was about to use her 'Illumination' spell, he told her "Don't... If it's bright, we won't be able to read it."

She closed the door behind her and asked "I'm confused, what are we supposed to be reading?" After they all entered the wide living-room, Sarah pulled the skull out of her first bag-slot and laid down on the middle of the floor.

The Michael laid down to her left, and Elina just sat down next to him, while using her glowing golden-eyes to see through the darkness. As the worm-girl channeled her aura into the 'skill-book,' its eye-sockets began emitting a bright-red light.

Then the words "Shadowcraft and Necromancy" appeared; the Priestess however, saw something completely different: "Followers of Lux cannot access this information."

After reading that, Elina frowned and then told the other two "I'm going to go bask in the Moon's radiance and Meditate." She didn't want to have anything to do with such dark-magic, so she promptly excused herself from whatever they were planning to do.

Michael snickered and asked "What are you waiting for? Keep going..." The little girl was intently staring at the three words and biting her lower-lip so hard that it was bleeding.

After a few seconds, she turned her head to face him and muttered "I can't read it, what does it say?" The literacy rate was extremely high in cities and large towns, but small Goblin villages weren't so lucky.

He smirked and then patted her slimy, worm-like hair, before telling her "Fine, it says 'Shadowcraft and Necromancy.' It's basically just the title; now turn the damn page, or however the hell that thing works."

Fortunately, rather than a book, it was more like a movie and there was even a deep, ominous voice that narrated the 'documentary.' When it first started, Sarah yelled "Holy shit! This is amazing!"

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On the other hand, Michael just snickered and complained “Everything is tinted red, and the camerawork is terribad, but at least it’s in color and has sound.”

The first thing that happened was an explanation of the Assassin Class and the various methods for a person to create their first mana-core. It was a video that showed Human children who weren’t even five years old, using their bare hands to viciously claw, bite and beat each-other to death.

They were essentially running a series of orphanages, where abandoned infants and toddlers of the Darkness Element would be gathered in large numbers. When they reached a certain age, the black-masked men and women would place twenty-one of them at a time, into a small fighting pit.

Their Affinity made them naturally predisposed to violence and killing, so they were simply allowed to follow their most basic instincts. Only one child would be left alive at the end, and by being the only survivor, they gained enough experience to reach level-one and also evolved to rank-G.

There weren’t any visible physical changes, but a black aura started to emanate from the child’s body. Michael asked the little worm-girl “Is that how you gained your first mana-core?”

She shook her head and complained “I wish... No I actually had to Meditate every night, for three fucking years. If I knew there was such an easy and quick way, I would have just slaughtered all the other brats who were training with me. Since I was always stealing from the assholes in Jacobstown, I received the Thief Class when I evolved.”

## Chapter 53: A Hardcore Documentary

After that, the few children who survived their death-matches, were each taught the various methods for cultivating Aura and training their physical bodies, while enriching their minds. Aside from basic Meditation to raise the Aura stat, they would spend each night, sleeping in a large coffin: filled with the relatively small skeletons of their former enemies.

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The bleached white bones would continually absorb the Darkness mana and actually grow in size, along with the kids. For the next few years, they learned how to use a handful of simple spells, gained a few passives regarding weapon masteries, and were given tainted food and water every day.

Once 'Immune System Boost' and 'Poison Resistance' reached level-three, the children would begin using poisoned weapons in training, and eating raw meat, while drinking nothing but animal blood. By the time they became adolescents, their Darkness Affinity would reach level-five and their Aura stat would be at least two-points.

That's when they would begin their 'Willpower' training. Each student would be paired up with an instructor and every day, they would be whipped, beaten, flogged, and tortured in a myriad of simple but horribly painful ways.

However, the strangest thing was that the teenagers seemed to actually enjoy it. They would also make a sacrifice to the Goddess of Darkness; boys would castrate themselves, and girls would cut open their own abdomen and remove their ovaries.

There would be a ritual, where they could meet an avatar of Umbra and she would heal their injuries, while infusing their bodies with her deathly aura. After a year, they were allowed to make the sacrifice again and gain even more power.

It was possible for them to perform the ritual seven times, but after that, they would no longer be graced by the Goddess. At that point, they would be permanently sterilized and could never reproduce. Since it was a curse, regardless of whether or not their injuries recovered, they simply wouldn't be able to have children after that.

Once they finally reached adulthood, that was when those old bones that they had been feeding mana into for most of their lives, would finally be able to form mana-cores. As soon as the twenty rank-G skeletons were created, they would gain their Profession: Necromancer.

When he saw that part, Michael muttered "That's weird, isn't Necromancer usually a class?" However, it was almost immediately explained to the two of them.

Essentially, there were two different methods to reanimate a corpse using the Darkness Element. The first was similar to Enchanting; by collecting the remains of an unranked person or beast, a ridiculous amount of mana needed to be channeled into the carcass, before it would finally be able to form a mana-core.

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Rather than becoming a Companion, the undead creature would simply be a puppet or Darkness Golem. Without a will of its own, it could still follow simple commands, and be extremely useful eventually.

By feeding it higher ranked mana-cores, it was possible for it to evolve into a more effective and powerful tool. The undead weren't Soulbound to the Necromancer, so they could actually be sold as either a source of labor, expendable soldiers, or pseudo-Companions for adventurers.

Obviously, the various factions of the Goddess of Light would typically persecute and vilify anyone who would be willing to use such abominable creatures. Thus, it was rather uncommon for undead to appear under the control of anyone who wasn't a Necromancer.

The second method was a bit different, and involved 'corrupting' the mana-core and corpse of ranked humanoid or magical-beast. It was possible to create much more powerful allies that way, but they wouldn't be puppets.

After hearing that, Michael muttered "Wait a fucking second... Doesn't that mean your father and those two nekomimi are still alive-ish?"

Sarah shrugged and told him "Do you honestly think that I care?"

However, then he snickered and asked "Oh, really? I remember eavesdropping on the two of you talking to each-other before you evolved... Something about wanting to get revenge on a bunch of assholes in Carrabelle City, right? Well, if those douche-bags were rank 'G' or higher, then doesn't that mean they're actually still alive? You aren't even slightly interested in killing them, permanently?"

Hearing that, the worm-girl suddenly trembled and glared at him, before saying "Thanks for reminding me."

He snickered and then told her "Pause the video for me, I need to piss." She stopped channeling mana into the skull, and waited for him to return from outside.

It had been three hours since the beginning of the movie, and there was still quite a bit left. Even the worm-girl had to put the projector down and go outside to relieve herself. Apparently, if she prevented her tail from urinating and defecating, her normal bladder and bowels would eventually fill with excrement, and she had to deal with that the old fashioned way.

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When they continued watching, Michael smirked and asked “Holy shit, is this supposed to be porn?” Those children had all grown into adults, and it was finally time for them to begin releasing their desires.

After being tortured for seven years by their instructors, they had developed strange and complicated relationships. It was typically a sexual relationship based around hate and pain; consensual, yet extremely violent and sometimes lethal.

The video was practically voyeurism, since it was obvious that the people being recorded didn’t know that there was a pseudo-camera in the room. Since the instructors were typically the less talented of the previous generation, in many cases, they would literally be killed by their furious students.

Michael was actually masturbating at that point, as he snickered and complimented “This is pretty awesome... Cannibalism, necrophilia, there’s the whole teacher-student taboo going on, plus the hardcore bondage scenes. It’s kinda lame that they’re all Humans, but whatever, it’s still pretty kinky.”

The worm-girl to his left also felt a strange sense of arousal from watching the gory and cruel sex-scenes. Then the narrator explained “For those who give-in to their desires and fornicate, while immersed in the carnage and violence, the Goddess shall give her Blessing of Lust. While those who abstain, are rewarded with the Blessing of Purity. Both paths are extraordinarily beneficial to the Assassin, and shall greatly influence their future cultivation and potential growth.”

She turned towards the naked man to her left and asked “Which do you think I should try to get?”

Without even considering the second choice, Michael immediately told her “Obviously Lust... I mean, you already gave away your worm-virginity like it was nothing, so I kinda doubt you’re the Purity type. Maybe if there was a Blessing of Bitchy Cuntitude, but there probably isn’t. Besides, you have a horny immortal bastard like myself to use and abuse, hehe~.”

Sarah scowled and continued to watching the video. Once the students had received their blessings, it was time for them to finally begin working as Assassins.

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One of the fastest ways to improve the Aura stat and Darkness Affinity, was to kill enemies who had the Light Affinity. However, she already knew that much, so it wasn't particularly helpful.

Reanimating corpses was another way, and that was essentially the most important aspect of the whole documentary. It did cover a decent amount of spells and skills that she didn't have, but the moment that it finally ended, she told him "I want to try out Necromancy."

Michael snickered and said "Yeah, it does seem like fun. Unfortunately, I can't actually learn it myself. Hehehe~, I'm pretty sure you've never tried this before, but you can actually remove only specific parts of things out of your inventory. For example..." The two of them sat up and Sarah sent the obsidian skull into her first bag-slot.

Suddenly the skull of a tiger appeared in the man's hands, and he explained "Basically, all you have to do, is go out and kill some animal and then you can directly pull out the the skeleton without having to deal with all the other nonsense."

After he made the pure-white skull disappear, the worm-girl asked "Can I have one of your corpses? It's not like you're using them for anything, right?"

Michael smirked and said "Yeah, sure, but don't play with it in the house. Here, I'll send it directly into your inventory..." as he placed his right hand on her shoulder. A screen popped up, which showed her three bag-slots; the first had the Obsidian Skull, the second was a black-leather backpack, and the third was empty.

Without hesitation, he sent all eleven of the corpses that he had collected, directly into her storage. When she saw how many there were, Sarah snickered and asked "What the fuck were you planning on doing with these things anyway?"

He smirked, answering "I figured they'd be worth something eventually. Maybe I'd become a Necromancer, or I don't know... I probably just have hoarding issues."

## Chapter 54: Legacies of the Ancient Players

After receiving the collection of corpses, Sarah left the empty house and traveled along the river for a few hundred meters. Once she found a suitable dark and empty cave, she entered inside and claimed it as her personal lair.

When Michael tried to follow after her, she yelled “Fuck off, and don’t try to spy on me with that damn ball of black shit either!” Even homicidal worm-girls need privacy occasionally.

He sighed dramatically and muttered “It’s not like you can stop me...” as he dejectedly walked back to the house. There were still plenty of things that he needed to do, but the first was obviously to find a place to empty his inventory.



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After walking into the 'Kitchen' area, he started pulling huge fifty-pound sacks of dried rice out of his sixteenth bag-slot. Michael snickered and said "I can't believe that they were selling these for only twenty-copper a piece."

Once he placed down five sacks in the corner of the relatively large room, a massive burlap satchel appeared between both of his hands. He had discovered a trick or gimmick to mix different kinds of items into a single bag-slot.

Essentially, if he just gathered a bunch of dried macaroni into one of the slots, he could literally store several metric tonnes of it. However, he wouldn't be able to have spaghetti and linguine, or other types of pastas mixed in with it.

Since he didn't want to buy such a ridiculous amount of food in the first place, he tried placing six or seven different kinds of noodles into a sack, and then placing that container into the thirteenth bag-slot. The result was that it worked, and he could even remove the specific types of pasta he wanted.

The total amount was around fifty pounds, but there were a myriad of different types that were mixed together. Michael placed it next to the rice, and then moved onto spices.

There had actually been an entire store that only sold various types of spices, and he was amazed at the variety. Unfortunately, everything except for salt was extremely expensive.

He was able to purchase fifty pounds of pasta for one silver, but a small glass bottle containing a few ounces of Thyme was the same price. Since dried seasonings were typically used very sparingly when cooking a meal, he focused on buying as many different kinds as possible, rather than having a bulk supply.

After placing the rather large bag of assorted spices onto the pile of rice and pasta, Michael removed a huge glass container of dried, green-tea leaves, and placed it gently onto the floor. He smirked and muttered "Hehe~, all of this shit only cost a single gold coin... Actually, isn't that really expensive? Hmm~, well whatever, food is definitely worth it."

Then he moved onto the bathroom, and dumped a stream of fifty, small orange soap-bars onto the floor. Once that was finished, he carefully removed a dozen large glass bottles, which were each filled with a creamy white substance. The combination of body-soap and shampoo had cost him twenty-five silver.

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Michael finally walked up the stairs, entered his bedroom, walked over to the balcony and sat down onto the ground: leaning his back against the railing. It was only then that he remembered to put his Equip his armor again, before taking out the item which was the most expensive.

He smiled faintly, and muttered “I wonder what seventy-five silver would be if it was converted into dollars? This thing would definitely be worth at least five-hundred... A decent amount of the original Players must have come from the same era as me, or they wouldn’t have been able to pass down so much technology. Hell, they have electric-guitars for fuck’s sake, and skulls that function as movie projectors. I wonder if they were from the same Earth as me, or if it was a parallel universe?”

The acoustic guitar in his hands wasn’t particularly special in any way. Rather than the nylon and steel that he was used to, the strings were catgut, or made from the intestines of various animals.

While he was busy tuning it, he complained “The action isn’t very good, but it’s not the worst I’ve ever had to deal with either. Sigh, they had so many instruments, I definitely need to buy as many as possible before shit hits the fan.”

When he saw a grand piano for fifty gold, he tried to shove it into his inventory, but received a message: “Cannot store items that do not belong to the Player.” Stealing with the extra-dimensional bag was apparently not possible, so unless he killed the owner and then took it, he would have to pay for it.

The magical instruments were far more expensive than the normal kind. A full-sized keyboard, with only a dozen or so sounds, would cost him nearly two-hundred gold.

Michael finally managed to tune the guitar by ear after three minutes, and began playing some simple chords. He muttered “Even though the calluses are gone, I guess the Defense Rating is affecting the skin on my fingers, huh? I just hope my ridiculous strength doesn’t accidentally break the strings...”

Even if he hadn’t played a guitar in over a year, his skills hadn’t deteriorated at all. In fact, with the additional Intelligence that he had gained, he was able to remember songs that he had almost completely forgotten.

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As the sun was slowly rising at the edge of the horizon, Elina opened the sliding-glass door and startled him. She placed her hands on the railing and stared off into the distance, while asking “Why did you stop?”

He glanced up at the beautiful cat-girl, and answered “It’s been so long since I last played, I’m a little nervous...”

The Priestess frowned and glared at him while complaining “You’re embarrassed about your amazing musical talents, but you have no shame when it comes to pleasuring yourself or exposing yourself to an innocent maiden?”

Michael snickered and said “I was just playing a few random chords; if that’s enough to impress you, then I’m guessing that you haven’t practiced any instruments, right?”

She sighed and admitted “Back in the Convent, we would learn hymns and sing songs devoted to our Goddess. I was part of a chorus, but I was never very good. The more talented singers would usually be able to gain an Aura-point each year... I still haven’t managed to gain my Goddess’ favor in that regard.”

While smirking, he asked “Why don’t you sing for me? I’ll let you know if you’re doing something wrong.” With her dramatically increased Charisma, he felt that her voice would probably sound amazing, and it did... in a way.

Elina smiled and gazed out at the rising sun, while beginning her song: “Meow~ meow-meow, oh-oh-ah, nya~”

However, before she could even start, Michael began laughing hysterically and yelled “Wait, wait, stop! You’ve gotta be fucking with me right now...”

The Priestess glared at him and shouted “What’s so funny?! This is the Hymn of Lux that my ancient ancestors passed down!”

After hearing that, he cackled uncontrollably for at least two whole minutes, before Elina started crying and was about to leave. Then he finally calmed down and told her “No, that’s the theme song to an anime from my world; it was about cat-girls who pilot giant robots and fight aliens. Your ancient ancestors definitely stole it from there... Basically, you’ve never actually gone to a Human church or temple for the Goddess of Light.”

She bit her lip and yelled “Blasphemy! You-you’re lying! The Hymn of Lux was written in an ancient language that-”

He interjected “Nope, it was written by a Japanese guy who recorded a bunch of actual cats meowing, then turned it into a song. Your Goddess probably thought it was cute at first, like thousands of years ago... but now it probably just pisses her off. Hmmm, I only watched the first seven seasons, so I don’t know all the songs, but I did learn how to play most them for whatever reason.”

As he played the medley on the guitar and even sang the ‘meows’ and ‘nyas,’ Elina calmed down and started singing along. Her pure-white aura, mixed with his colorless Arcane mana and then spread out into the sky, creating a blinding pillar of magical-radiance.

When they were finally finished, the Priestess beamed a cheerful grin at the snickering man. Then a message popped up in front of the two of them: “Aura stat has increased by one point.”

## Chapter 55: Arcane Lore

They were only performing for less than an hour, and they both received a whole point of Aura for it. Michael snickered and explained “It’s either because I’m a Player and you’re my Companion, or it could be because of our combined Luck being really high. Your Charisma also increased by three when you evolved, so that could be another reason.”

Elina sighed and sat down across from him, leaning her back against the wooden railing. She asked “I can understand why my Goddess rewarded me, but why did she also bestow her gift upon you as well?”

Suddenly a beam of blinding light fell from the heavens, and landed on center of the balcony, between the two of them. When the pillar faded, a glowing feminine figure remained.

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It was a humanoid woman with porcelain skin, wearing a golden robe and with two gigantic dove-like wings, spreading from her shoulder-blades. Her face was covered by a silver mask, which had no discernible features and her wavy blonde hair was so long that it hung down to her waist. Above her head were the words “Sophia the Wise, Level-25 Lesser-Angel Priestess, Rank-E, Super-Elite.”

Elina was too surprised to speak, so Michael asked “Are you here for the key?” Since her name was yellow, he wasn’t immediately sure if she was an enemy or ally.

She turned towards him and her golden irises released a blinding light, as she whispered “I’ve heard nothing of this ‘key’ you speak of. I was gliding along the outskirts of the Forbidden Forest when I saw your beacon. Are the two of you survivors from Carrabelle?”

Michael told her “Pretty much... We were staying in Jacobstown when all that nonsense happened. We weren’t trying to let out a distress call or anything like that though; just playing a few Hymns for Lux.”

The Angel glared at him for a few moments, before turning towards the cat-girl and asking “Would you like me to carry you away from here? You might not have noticed, but our Goddess has sent her Supreme Emissary back to this mortal plane. Helel has summoned all the forces of pure Light, to return to the Holy Capital Luxia. I can take you with me, or you can travel there on your own... but I would suggest making your way there soon.”

Elina glanced at her smirking Companion, and bit her lip fiercely, before looking up at the relatively short woman and saying “Sorry, the Goddess needs me to be here for the moment. When my mission is complete, I’ll be able to heed the Morning Star’s call.”

Hearing that response, Sophia nodded and then gently floated off the ground, reaching a suitable height and then flapping her gigantic wings once. Her body was so light, that even the smallest amount of force was enough to allow her to soar.

Once she was gone, Michael started laughing hysterically and said “The fucking Supreme Emissary of Light is Lucifer? I mean, I get it, but I can pretty much guarantee that they’re one of the main end-bosses that we’ll have to fight eventually.”

The Priestess scowled and complained “How can you even think about fighting Helel? From the legends, her methods did seem a bit excessive, but ultimately, she definitely wasn’t ‘evil.’ Well, the Priestess Order of Healing Light typically doesn’t condone killing,

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unless it's absolutely necessary. Besides, the Morning Star is supposedly a Rank-SSS World Boss, who has been around for so long that no one even knows what level she is anymore."

He sighed, then gazed up at the brightening sky, while asking her "Why didn't you go with that suspicious Angel?" as he unconsciously began playing the guitar that was still in his hands.

Elina smirked, while answering "You were right... I'm so pathetically weak. How could I possibly complete my task alone? Even if you're vulgar, obnoxious, rude, and probably insane... If I stay with you, I'll definitely become powerful eventually."

Michael said "Yeah, I'm a crazy asshole, but that's probably why I was brought into this world. Ah, I almost forgot! Oi, Arcana, you there? Do you wanna play Chess?"

The Priestess furrowed her brows and yelled "The Goddesses won't just come play games with you on a whim!" as he shoved the guitar into his sixteenth bag-slot.

However, almost immediately after she shouted, an incredibly powerful aura erupted from the center of the balcony. An illusory chessboard suddenly appeared in front of the sitting man, and then a blurry feminine form became slightly visible.

Elina gasped and held both hands over her mouth so that she wouldn't scream or speak. The most terrifying beings in the world that NPCs knew of, were the Goddesses that they didn't worship.

Arcana smiled, while gently whispering "There's no need for you to fear me child... Also, you are wrong about us; all of my daughters enjoy games and music. They all have preferences, but if you're curious, why not ask Little Lux yourself."

Hearing a 'divine' being actually speak to her, the terrified and star-struck cat-girl fainted: even losing control of her bladder. Michael complained "Of for fuck's sake! Ugh, give me a second; I need to clean up after this brat."

Before he could stand, the urine completely vanished into nothingness and then the unconscious Priestess was teleported into his bedroom. Arcane giggled and softly asked "Have you thought about which Class you would like to obtain?"

He sat back down and moved one of his pawns forward as he replied "Of course I've 'thought' about it... but I honestly don't know what my options are. I'm really loving

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magic, and Arcane is probably gonna be my favorite Element, even after I have six others eventually. However, can something like a Battle-Mage act as a Tank? I'm the type of person who likes to be able to play the most overpowered Class, which can basically do everything: Tanking, Melee and Ranged DPS, plus Healing."

Moving her own pawn forward, the illusory Goddess told him "A jack of all trades is a master of none... You are given six possible Companions to make up for your shortcomings. In the time before, when there were innumerable Players, they would band together into groups and conquer our Dungeons. It was entertaining to watch them struggle and eventually achieve victory, after suffering from many defeats."

Michael snickered as he moved a knight, then asked "Yeah, I kinda figured that, but I can at least be a master of Tanking and DPS, while being halfway decent at healing or support, right? Hmmm~, what's the deal with that anyway? Before me, you guys brought over a ton of people from my world... Did their subscription run out, or was there some other reason for them no longer being around?"

She sighed and solemnly answered "We were naive and foolish back then... Most Humans were nothing like you. They wanted to return to their original world and lives, so they disappeared. We may have the power to bring souls from your world into ours, but we do not possess the ability to force them to stay. After millions disappeared beyond our reach, we warned the remainder that they certainly couldn't return from where they came, but without a strong will... they eventually left. Some of them lasted for thousands of years, and there were many who left this planet and explored the others."

Then he said "Ah, so I'm allowed to stay here for as long as I want and you guys won't kick me out, hehe~. The question is, are you planning on causing Noobageddon? Or am I the main character of this story... Oi, you didn't pick me just because my initials are 'MC,' right?"

Arcana giggled and whispered "Perhaps we will, but no, it was because of your mental fortitude. You barely spoke during our last match... Are you attempting to distract me?"

He snickered and shook his head, before explaining "Nah, I'm not that clever; I was afraid to piss you off last time. I mean, I was kinda worried you would evict me from the world if I asked too many questions. Anyway, normally these games would have tutorials and a bunch of lore that I could read up on. Well, since the creator is right in front of me, I figured you'd tell me the basics at least. For example: What Classes can I choose from?"

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Their Chess match was already halfway finished, and Michael knew that he would have to wait another twenty-four hours to speak with her again, so he wanted to gather as much information as possible. The illusory Goddess hesitated for a moment, then revealed “We didn’t create the Classes and Professions. The original Players were given the freedom to invent most of the technologies, spells, techniques, and even the various races. Using them as a template, their descendants could follow in their ancestors footsteps to attain similar Classes and Professions.”

He smirked and asked “So basically, you’re telling me I have to make them up on my own, or just learn it from an NPC. Hmmm~, well, that’s fine... I can probably think of something decent.”

## Arc 6: OP-ness Is Relative



## Chapter 56: Hardcore Games

“Haven’t you ever wondered why very few people are willing to play with us?” Arcana was on the verge of winning, when she suddenly asked a very ominous question.

Michael snickered and said “There’s probably some sort of penalty for losing, right? In the book it mentioned that the price for failure was Aura points.”

She giggled, then shook her illusory head, whispering “We all have our punishments, some are more extreme than others. Checkmate...” Suddenly, both the man and Goddess vanished, and even the illusory chessboard disappeared.

After a few minutes Michael materialized back on his balcony while screaming “What the actual fuck!? Ow, ugh, no, nope, sigh~... Not cool Arcana! Ya could’ve at least given me a warning! Like ‘Oh hey, we’re going spacewalking now; be sure to pack a motherfucking space-suit!’ Naw, that’s fine, it’s not like I can permanently die, right?!”

Then he received a message: “Title Earned: The Astronaut. While many look up at the Moon, Sun and stars as if they’re merely an illusion, you know differently. The sky is not the limit, and those who are brave enough to enter into the void shall receive the blessings of the Arcane Goddess. Intelligence, Wisdom and Perception have been increased by one point each.”

Once he saw that, Michael immediately regained his composure and muttered “Hmmm~, it seems like she really likes to watch me die... Well, whatever, at least I got stats out of it; plus I managed to experience one of my greatest fears. It wasn’t quite as terrifying and horrible as I imagined, but that’s probably only because of my Defense Rating; at higher levels, it’s probably possible to survive in a vacuum while being bombarded by massive amounts of radiation and resist the ridiculously cold temperatures.”

For a moment before his vision faded, he had been able to glimpse at what was supposed to have been an endless expanse, devoid of life. However, he saw all sorts of celestial creatures, monsters, demons, undead, angelic beings and colossal entities of pure-mana.

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Some of them were traveling in clusters, while others were so enormous that they could devour small planets. He was also able to discover something very interesting: 'SSS' wasn't the highest rank, and there were at least two more types of Bosses after World.

Since he was making so much noise, the fainted Priestess was startled awake. She saw Michael pacing back and forth on the balcony, and slowly made her way outside.

He snickered and said "Your first meeting with a Goddess... and you piss yourself."

Elina was still a little groggy when she suddenly remembered what happened, then her face became flushed, as she asked "Wait, that wasn't a dream?!"

Michael sighed and complained "Seriously, you're lucky Arcana didn't teleport you into space. Anyway, there was something that I was wondering about earlier." She was blankly staring off into the sunrise, as he continued "So basically, I didn't know this before, but aren't your brother and sister still out there?"

Hearing that, the cat-girl glared at him before muttering "You told me that they died, and my guild bracelet said the same thing. How could they still be alive?"

He snickered and explained "Nah, they definitely died, but according to that creepy skull thingy... if a person with a mana-core is resurrected as an undead, their soul and personality remain the same. They basically just gain the 'Darkness' Affinity and ya know, look all corpsy; I wonder if their Charisma stat drops or something like that?"

Elina yelled "So what you're telling me, is that Rick and Lily are still alive, but suffering forever as abominations!?" Tears began falling from her golden eyes, again, because it was obviously a very sensitive subject for the distraught cat-girl.

However, he immediately shouted "Calm the fuck down! When did I say they're suffering? Besides, it's been like three goddamn days; how the hell is that an eternity? They're probably just off, screwing around with the rest of the undead hordes. Once we become strong enough, I think we should go try to find them. I have a feeling that those angelic bastards are probably gonna start warring with the legions of the damned soon, and your siblings might get caught in the crossfire if we wait too long."

The Priestess gazed into the blinding sun while murmuring "Goddess, I know that it's inappropriate for me to ask you this... but are my brother and sister really still alive?" For a moment, she imagined seeing the figure of a beautiful Cat-Tribe woman, with

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dozens of colossal wings of pure-white radiance spreading behind her; then her vision darkened until all she could see was that magnificent being of Light.

Suddenly a message popped-up in front of her face: “The world is currently in a state of great upheaval. Helel has returned from the heavens to lead the armies of Lux against Umbra’s legions of undead. However, the forces of Naturae and Chaos are also preparing for battle, as well as their four children: Ignis, Aeris, Terra and Aqua. Aside from Arcana, all the other Goddesses are preparing for war.”

Michael commented “Holy shit, is this a fucking Main-Quest?” Elina wasn’t the only one who received the notification.

Then the two of them continued to read “However, that is only on the surface. The various countries who worship Lux are in conflict with each-other, even the undead legions are divided and at war with themselves. Gaea’s forces are coalescing, but the various Warbeast Tribes are still hostile towards their neighbors. This turbulent era is the perfect environment for true Adventurers to thrive. Mercenaries for the Goddesses, who are unbound by the laws of countries and religions.”

Michael complained “Okay then, is there actually gonna be a point somewhere in this huge info-dump?”

Elina glared at him and asked “How can you be so disinterested? The whole world is in turmoil and you act as if it doesn’t affect you!”

He started snickering, as they continued to read “You have gained access to the Battlegrounds feature. Regardless of where you and your Companions are, upon choosing a side, you will all be immediately teleported to the war-front. All experience gains, physical currency, and Favor will be rewarded to your team as a whole, depending on your total contribution to the battle. After the conflict is over, you will all be teleported back to your original positions.”

The Priestess seemed extremely confused, so Michael explained “It ain’t that fucking complicated. Well, since there were no other ‘Players,’ I kinda figured that PvP wouldn’t exist... I guess it really doesn’t. Anyway, we basically just open this menu, then scan through the list of ongoing or upcoming battles, and bam! The second we pick one, we’ll be sent straight to the front-lines, hahaha~! Oh shit, no, cancel, stop, damn-it, I accidentally selected one... Well, it says we have like two hours to get ready.”

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In a damp and dark cave to the west, a small, naked, red-skinned girl was sinking her fang-like teeth into the face of an unrecognizable man. Her slimy body was making sloshing noises, as it undulated rhythmically against his.

She moaned quietly, mixed with low growls and high-pitched shrieks. A nearly invisible, pitch-black, feminine humanoid figure was silently watching the Bloodworm-Goblin devouring and defiling the half-eaten corpse.

Sarah groaned as her tail penetrated inside of the man's abdomen and began feasting on the surprisingly fresh organs that had yet to start decomposing. While she was enjoying herself, a message suddenly appeared, but she didn't bother reading it.

An hour later, when there was nothing but a bloody skeleton remaining of the level-one, rank-F, Human corpse. What she didn't devour with her mouth, was consumed by the worm-like tail.

When she finally finished, a notification appeared: "You have received a new passive. Umbra's Blessing of Lust Level 1: Satisfying your carnal desires upon the remains of a man or woman who you're sexually attracted to, will increase your Aura by one point per level of the corpse."

A raspy voice whispered into her left, long and pointed, ear: "Oh, quite a vicious child... Heh-heh~, you should invite your Companion to join you next time."

When Sarah turned towards the source of that noise, she couldn't see anyone in the darkness with her: even with her relatively high Perception. She calmly asked "Who the fuck are you and how long have you been spying on me?"

Then the phantom-like existence revealed "Hmmm~, I'm the one who just gave you that blessing... If you're still unable to understand, heh-heh~."

The worm-girl's blood-soaked face became rigid as she said "Goddess Umbra..." A terrifying and freezing cold aura suddenly enveloped the entire cave, and a dim purple light illuminated the figure of an obsidian-skinned woman, wearing a pitch-black dress and having no discernible facial features.

Umbra snickered faintly, before softly asking "Would you like to play a game with me?"

## Chapter 57: The House Always Wins, so It's Better to Play in a Cave

Arcana enjoyed strategy, Chaos loved gambling, Lux would play childish games like tag, Naturae enjoyed gardening, and each of the others had their own favorites as well. However, very few NPCs were ever able to personally meet with an avatar of any of the nine Goddesses.

Sarah asked the ominous woman "I don't really know any games... What exactly did you have in mind?"

Umbra chuckled then whispered "Ah~, it's called a 'Treasure Hunt' heh~. Somewhere in this room, I've hidden seven items; three of them are garbage, two will kill you, one is worth a fortune and the last is priceless. Finding them is the easy part, making the right choice... not so much."

The worm-girl frowned and replied "Yeah, I'll play; not sure how this is a game though." As soon as she finished speaking, that oppressive aura vanished and the obsidian-skinned Goddess faded into the darkness.

With six Perception, even if there was almost no light, Sarah was still able to see fairly well. In fact, with her mana-sense, she immediately located four of the seven items in the relatively small limestone cavern.

Three of them looked like brilliantly luminous, golden Human skulls, and they were hidden inside of large stalactites. She needed to use her Obsidian Wakizashi to uncover them, but when she saw how suspiciously expensive they looked, her assumption was that they were the 'garbage' items.

The other object that she found was a gigantic silver greatsword, buried a few meters deep, into one of the walls. It was so massive that the hilt was ten feet long, and far too thick for even an ogre's hands to grasp.

Sarah sighed and complained "How the fuck am I supposed to find the other three?" After a few minutes of searching fruitlessly, her senses started becoming more acute.

It wasn't that her Perception was rising, but that she was unconsciously channeling mana into her sensory organs and increasing their efficiency. Her MP began rapidly

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dropping, but she was able to hear an eerie humming noise coming from one of the small tunnels within the cave.

When she approached it, a throbbing sensation caused her head to feel as if it was about to explode. Without taking another step forward, she quickly retreated in the opposite direction.

The worm-girl had found one of the deadly items on the list, though she had no idea what it was. After returning to the main cavern, she heard a beautiful melody, but ignored it; she knew that it was most likely another trap.

The priceless treasure that she wanted, was something that couldn't be sensed through her limited range of Perception. Sarah spent forty minutes furiously searching every nook and cranny that she could find, destroying stalactites and stalagmites with her seemingly indestructible blade.

Then she suddenly scowled, remembering that 'skill-book' and how it spoke about the various 'sacrifices' that people would make to Umbra. Grimacing, the girl laid down on her back and carefully used her wakizashi to slice open her abdomen.

The damage was surprisingly low, as she 'gently' opened up the area around her naval: screaming in pain the entire time. While her medical knowledge was practically non-existent, she did remember from the video, where the ovaries were.

Sarah removed the left one first, and was surprised at how similar it was to a Human's. After tearing it apart with her teeth, she couldn't find anything particularly special about it.

However, when she opened up the second one, there was a pitch-black pearl-like object at the center. She started laughing hysterically, and unhesitantly swallowed the mysterious mana-core.

A sinister, freezing-cold aura enveloped her whole body and then a terrifying numbness permeated her mind. It would have been nearly impossible for a person with poor Perception to tell, but in that light-less cavern, the worm-girl's skin began to rapidly darken.

Eventually, her flesh had turned completely obsidian, and not only that, but all of the worms that were wriggling around on her scalp had died. Within seconds, thick locks of

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bluish-silver hair had emerged; although, it was all clumped together from the slimy mucus and blood that she was laying in.

She quietly slipped into unconsciousness, as pitch-black finger and toenails began growing. Sarah's skin was still incredibly slimy and smooth; her tail still appeared like a giant bloodworm, but ebony, instead of pink.

Her lips and tongue had changed from an inky color, to a light-blue. Those slightly elongated and pointed ears, started to grow a few centimeters longer, and the wounds on her abdomen quickly healed.

However, the lithe, four-foot tall frame hadn't been altered at all. When she opened her eyes, the obsidian sclera suddenly began turning a dark shade of purple; then her very large irises began glowing with a bright blue luster, while her pupils remained pitch-black.

Then she saw a message: "You have been given a new title: The Daughter of Umbra. It is incredibly rare for the Goddesses to take an interest in mortals, but it does happen occasionally. You have been unfortunate enough to be favored by Umbra, and she will likely use you as a source of entertainment from now on. Willpower and Luck have both increased by three points."

Then another notification popped-up: "You have successfully evolved into a Dark-Goblin. Base stats have increased based on your Luck and the 'Essence of Umbra' that the mana-core originally belonged to: +3 Aura, +1 Charisma, +1 Perception, +1 Dexterity, +3 Agility."

[Companion Information

Name: Sarah

Titles: The Tree-Hater, Of the Eternal Darkness, The Necrophiliac, The Daughter of Umbra

Level: 10

Experience: 46/100

Age: Adult

Race: Dark-Goblin

Rank: E

Class: Shadow

Specialization: Stealth, Melee Damage Dealer

Profession: Unemployed]

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[Stats

Health: 30/30  
Mana: 20/20  
Stamina: 15/15

Mana Regen per minute: 30  
Health Regen per hour: 30  
Strength: 4  
Vitality: 3  
Endurance: 3  
Dexterity: 4(+1)  
Agility: 10(+4)  
Intelligence: 4  
Wisdom: 3  
Perception: 5(+2)  
Charisma: 3

Willpower: 11(+1)  
Luck: 9  
Aura: 5.5

Attack Rating: 20(+24)  
Defense Rating: 1.5(+6)]

[Passives

Immune System Boost Level 5: Resists Level five infectious diseases and illnesses.

Superior Regeneration Level 2: Organs and bones that have been lost, can be completely regenerated. Recovery speed is dependent on the amount of mana consumed.

Cutaneous Respiration Level 2: Able to absorb oxygen through the skin, as long as it's properly hydrated. Effectiveness is dependent on Vitality.

Darkness Affinity Level 5: Dark environments increase the speed of health and mana recovery. Increases damage to enemies with Light Affinity by 50%.



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Dagger Mastery Level 4: Increases Attack Rating while wielding knives, short-swords, and daggers by 20%.

Umbra's Blessing of Lust Level 1: Satisfying your carnal desires upon the remains of a man or woman who you're sexually attracted to, will increase your Aura by one point per level of the corpse.

Aura of Darkness Level 1: Killing enemies of the Light Attribute will increase the Aura stat by 1% of their level.]

[Spellbook

Shadow-Step Level 4: Teleports into the target's shadow. Range is dependent on Agility. Costs ten mana-points to activate.

Shadow-Cloak Level 3: Creates a shroud of darkness around the caster and all allies within range. Range is dependent on the Aura stat. Costs one mana-point per second.

Hate-Strike Level 2: Channels Dark-Mana into the caster's weapons, polluting the enemy's body and soul with destructive energy. Damage is dependent on the Aura stat. Twice as effective on enemies of the Light affinity. Costs five mana per second.]

Staring at her new rank, Sarah started grinning, while slowly standing up. Her body felt significantly lighter, and when she jumped, it took less than a second for her to reach the five-meter high ceiling.

Using her tail, she cushioned the impact dramatically and even launched herself back downward. With an obsidian short-blade in her hands, she practiced some acrobatic techniques, and even used Shadow-Step to teleport a few times.

It wasn't as if her skills had been instantly learned after all; she needed to train for a while, or it would be impossible for her to be completely comfortable with her new body. However, just when she was starting to enjoy herself, an irritating voice 'Whispered' into her mind: "Congrats on the rank-up and race-change... Just curious, but did you really fuck my corpse? I mean like, did his-er my penis, actually go inside of your vagina? It just seems kinda difficult... Did you use some sort of dark-magic to make it hard first, or did one of them already have a boner? Damn it, I should've ignored your ridiculous demands and just watched: like a normal person!"

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Elina shouted “How is anything you just said normal?!” As one of his Companions, she was also in the ‘Chat.’

Then there was a loud yelping noise, followed by some barking and whining. Michael complained “Oh for fuck’s sake; how can Inari be in the goddamn telepathic conversation? She can’t even speak!”

Sarah screamed “Shut up! What the hell do you bastards want from me!? Also, no, I didn’t try to shove your floppy corpse-cock in my pussy, ya happy?!”

Hearing that, Michael snickered and said “Well, I figured you might have ignored it, or maybe just weren’t paying attention... but there was this huge info-dump notification. Oh yeah, and I kinda-sorta signed us up for a Battleground, so were gonna be teleported into a war-zone in... now.”

## Chapter 58: The First Battleground

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A hundred miles southwest of Ariel's Meadow, there was a great expanse of flatland called 'Michelle's Prairie.' Similar to Carrabelle Plains, there were very few magical-beasts that lived in the region, so it was typically a safe-haven for humanoids.

Of course, that also made it one of the most violently contested zones in the region. In the northeastern corner, close to Ariel's Meadow and along the Archean River, there was a small fishing village: Luxiana.

Within the town lived three-thousand Cat-Tribe of various Clans, and aside from catching fish, they also herded cattle, harvested lumber from the nearby forest to the south, raised chickens and grew large amounts of maize. They also had a significant adventurer population because of their proximity to the low-level magical-beast zone.

Unfortunately, many of them were Druids, Shaman and Beast Tamers of the Nature Affinity. Hearing Gaea's call, they rushed towards the World Tree, and most of the others had been Humans.

When their entire military force consisted of fishermen, farmers and a handful of rank-G village guards, it was no surprise that they became an easy target for the nearby villages. An army of three-thousand unranked Human soldiers were slowly marching across the eastern grasslands, led by a handful of rank-G Knights on non-magical warhorses.

At the forefront was their general, a rank-F Priest of Lux. However, even their leader was only level-eleven, and nearly all of the unranked Warriors, Archers, and Spearmen were under level-two.

While the Knights wore rusty iron plate armor, the normal soldiers were lucky to have rough leather or just burlap cloth. Their weaponry was mainly cheaply made pitchforks, machetes, sickles, war-scythes, short-bows, and other farming or hunting equipment.

Against a small force of actual trained and equipped adventurers, they probably wouldn't even be able to use their numerical advantage to win. Yet, defending the border of Luxiana Village, was only a thousand men and women, even some elderly Cat-Tribe were holding their fishing-spears and farming tools.

Four rank-G Warriors were standing at the front of the formation, behind their rank-F leader, who was a Priestess of Lux. Unfortunately, she was only level-three and had never even seen combat before.

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In fact, only those four adventurers behind her had any experience in battle, and they were fairly certain of their imminent deaths. However, even if they were all destined to die, at least they would go out fighting for their homes and families.

The middle-aged Priestess had a stern expression as she held an unimpressive wooden-staff in her hands, which had a tiny mana-crystal at the tip. Her attire was a grey robe that covered her less than perfect body, and at five-feet tall, the bulky Warriors could see directly over her head with ease: past her fluffy, black cat-ears.

Then she closed her eyes and quietly prayed “Please Goddess, we’ve been your faithful children for our entire lives, please protect us from these barbarians...” A huge wave of light enveloped the entire army as she raised her glowing staff to the sky and cast “Divine Protection.”

Rather than Healing, her specialty was buffs and barriers, so her entire mana-pool was completely devoted to strengthening her allies. Unfortunately, if they were injured, there was nothing that she could do to save them.

When the advancing enemy army could finally be seen in the distance, the gathering of farmers and fishermen began trembling. Many of them decided to flee before the fight even started, and others were weeping loudly, or cursing their misfortune.

A decent amount of women, children, and elders were cowering in the large church at the center of town. All of them were praying for salvation, and the safety of their families... when suddenly, four bright-white lights shone down from the heavens.

Everyone, even the enemy army witnessed those four pillars of ‘divine’ aura, and they all saw it as an omen of victory. Of course, the ones who were the most surprised were the ‘army’ of Cat-Tribe farmers and fishermen.

Even the Priestess of Lux was amazed and shocked when those beams of light descended only a few meters in front of her face. It was deathly silent, and many of the people immediately fell down onto their knees to greet the ‘Angels’ who came to save them.

Then a loud masculine voice roared “We’re here, bitches~! Hahahahaha~!” A relatively short Human, wearing a tiger-fur kilt and boots, with a glowing die floating above his head and a bright ball of energy in his right hand, was facing towards the distant enemies.

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There was also a tall cat-eared, white-robed woman to his left, and an incredibly short obsidian-skinned creature with a slimy, worm-like tail on his right. Next to the little monster was a neon-green four-tailed fox, that was the size of a large dog, who was excitedly jumping around and barking loudly.

The middle-aged Priestess was still standing as she asked “Excuse me, are the three of you envoys of the Goddess?” Hearing that familiar voice, the girl with long, black and white striped hair quickly turned around and beamed a happy smile.

She ran forward and yelled “Mom!” as she wrapped her arms around the surprised woman. Tears were streaming down the relatively young cat-girl’s face as she said “Mom, it’s me, Elina... I probably look a little different now though.”

The man turned around and shouted “Haha~ I knew you guys would have some kinda connection. I mean, it said the leader of the army was named ‘Laura Jacobs,’ and she was a Priestess. Oi, if she’s your mother, then what was with all that purity bullshit? Did she just magically get prego with your eggo?”

Then the middle-aged woman dropped her staff and used both hands to tightly embrace her daughter, while asking “Little Lina, is that really you?” The excited vixen sprinted over to the two of them and jumped up onto that cat-girl’s head, before howling loudly and pouncing towards a bearded fox-man’s face.

He was one of the four adventurers, so he obviously had the ‘Identify’ skill, and yelled “Rank-E, it’s a rank-E magical-beast!” while raising his steel-shield and trying to block the sudden attack.

However, she was immediately repelled by a glowing barrier as a monotonous feminine voice announced “Friendly Fire has been averted.”

Michael scolded “Hey, Inari, cut that shit out! You can’t eat the beefy fox-man, so get your ass over here!” before turning to the naked and slimy obsidian-skinned Dark-Goblin and saying “Oi, Equip your gear, the battle’s gonna start soon and I don’t wanna have an erection the whole time we’re fighting.”

Sarah glared at him with her luminous purple eyes and asked “I thought you never killed anyone before; aren’t you nervous about losing your murder-virginity?”

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He snickered and explained “Nah, I already killed someone... I think he was an Ogre, or maybe an Orc. To be completely honest, I don’t really remember every trash-mob I meet. Also, this isn’t murder! This is basically just self-defense... or grinding, either way, we were hired by the Goddess of Light to slaughter these assholes. Besides, look at all these adorable nekomimi! Cuteness is justice, so massacring a bunch of Human cunt-bags who are trying to kill them is completely legal!”

As she Equipped her insubstantial tiger-fur armor, the slimy girl smirked, while gripping the hilt of her Obsidian Wakizashi with both hands. Considering that the sun was high in the sky and it was a beautiful cloudless day, she wouldn’t be receiving any benefits from the environment, but she was still incredibly excited.

Sarah murmured “I’ve always dreamt of having the chance to slaughter thousands of Humans...” while releasing her newly empowered aura of Darkness.

Michael picked up the adorable vixen into his arms and began gently caressing her fur, while yelling “Oi, Meow-Meow! Stop fuckin around with your mommy and lets go! Unless you plan on watching all these dumb-asses die, we need to wipe out those bastards before they make it here!”

Gathering all of her courage, Elina pulled herself away from her mother’s embrace and said “Mom, Rick and Lily... Never-mind, I love you, and I probably won’t be able to see you for a while after this. Here, take this money and use it to finally fix up that run-down church...” as she handed over a single gold coin.

It wasn’t much to a powerful adventurer, but for the Priestess of a small farming and fishing village, it was a small fortune. Laura frowned and asked her “Will the three of you really be able to defeat them?”

The smiling cat-girl nodded and confidently boasted “The Goddess of Light sent us here, didn’t she? How could we lose to a couple heretics?” as she turned towards the approaching army and bit her lip anxiously.

For Michael and Sarah, there wouldn’t be any real consequences, even if they lost. However, if they didn’t win, her only remaining family member would surely be killed.

## Chapter 59: Out-Ranking, Out-Leveling and Overpowering

“Fox Cannon!” With that furious shout, the battle had begun. A large green object was launched at over a hundred miles per hour, thrown like a football, towards an elderly man, wearing a pure-white robed.

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There was a look of shock and confusion on his face, as he tried to activate his most powerful 'Holy Shield' spell. However, before he even had a chance to open his mouth, the horse-riding Priest's head had disappeared.

A plume of fresh bright-red blood, sprayed out of the mutilated neck, as the twitching corpse immediately fell to the ground. His five rank-G, level-seven Knight bodyguards were completely stunned and terrified by that tiger-pelt wearing man's strange technique.

However, it happened too suddenly, so they weren't even able to realize that Michael had just thrown a magical-beast at them. The vicious fox had easily penetrated into the army of unranked soldiers, aiming for the very back of the group: the Archers.

Women and men were screaming in pain and fear, as their comrades were swiftly and abruptly eviscerated or decapitated in quick succession. The half-naked man was laughing hysterically as he yelled "Wow, these guys are really fucking weak! Sarah, you better hurry up, or Inari's gonna kill em all by herself!"

Then the little ebony Goblin sprinted forward, towards the five most powerful enemies that she could see. A female Knight, wearing rusty plate armor over her entire body, commanded "Shield-Wall up! Archers, fire at will! Atta-"

However, she was cut short, as a pitch-black blade erupted from her chest. The girl had teleported behind her, and swiftly ended the woman's life.

Sarah immediately teleported again, and decapitated one of the other Knights, leaving only three rank-G enemies remaining. Michael yelled "Catch!" as he pitched his Arcane Orb at a huge, two-meter tall man's tower-shield.

There was a loud 'dong' noise, as it bounced back a dozen meters into his hand. A huge '-60' appeared above the Knight's head, as he received a deadly-strike and died without even knowing what killed him.

Then a wave of arrows started falling from the sky, pelting Michael and Elina's bodies. The priestess swiftly cast 'Flash-Heal' on herself, to instantly recover from almost instantly dying.

However, the half-naked man just shouted "Ow, ouch, fuck, oi, that shit hurts! Stop it! Arg, ow, ugh, ah!" It felt as if someone was bombarding him with paintballs, but aside from a few bruises, his Health had only dropped by five points.



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With ten points of Defense Rating, it was almost impossible for most of the weaker Archers to actually hurt him. Elina screamed “Ah, it hurts so much! Ow-ow-ow, Michael, pull them out for me! Please~!” as she showed him the various arrows that had managed to pierce through her robe.

He complained “Damn it, why the fuck are you just standing out in the open like an idiot?! Healers are supposed to hide behind the Tanks!” He grabbed her whole body and pushed her down onto the ground, while standing with his back facing the second barrage of painful projectiles.

Once that was over, he knelt down, wrapped his hand around her left breast and lifted it up, then grabbed the shaft of an arrow that had been stopped by her massive mammary. Michael sighed and muttered “If you wanted a nipple piercing, ya could’ve started with a smaller gauge...” Then he moved onto the one that penetrated her right shoulder, and after that was her left leg.

While that was happening, Sarah had managed to decapitate another one of the Knights, and impaled the last one through the groin, leaving the woman screaming in pain and agony, as she slowly bled to death. There was no third wave of arrows, because Inari had slaughtered so many Archers, that the few hundred that still remained, were running for their lives.

Seeing how easily that their leaders were exterminated, many of the unranked, level-one melee fighters were far too terrified to attack the tiny little Dark-Goblin. It was also extremely demoralizing to see waves of arrows bounce off of a half-naked man’s chest and back, doing little to no actual damage.

Once Michael stopped ‘treating’ Elina’s wounds, and began throwing his Arcane Orb into the shield-wall, the last strand of moral was finally broken. Someone screamed “Retreat, retreat!” and another person shouted “It’s impossible, they’re monsters, we can’t win!”

Taking a deep breath, the relatively small man roared “Fuck off!” and his ‘Intimidation’ skill leveled up to three. Considering the unreasonable level-difference, combined with his recently improved Charisma, and the fact that he used his whole mana-pool, it was enough to ‘fear’ an entire army of two-thousand remaining soldiers.

While the enemies were fleeing, Inari and Sarah continued brutally massacring them. When the battle was technically over, Michael shouted at the distant Humans “Listen

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up, all you stupid bastards! This village belongs to the Goddess of Light, Lux! If any of you dumb-asses try this shit again, she'll send us to your fucking towns next!"

Then he snickered and helped the wounded Priestess up, while complaining "Seriously, I thought you said that Soulbound gear couldn't be destroyed... There's like three holes in your robe now, and one of them is revealing your mutilated left nipple. Are you gonna heal that, or just let it keep bleeding?"

Not just Laura, but the whole horde of villagers were rushing over to the their saviors, while excitedly cheering and thanking Lux. However, before Elina had the chance to say "Goodbye" to her mother, four beams of white-light descended.

A beautiful Angel was hovering in the skies above the battlefield; a silver mask was covering her face, but those cold, golden eyes were staring down at the aftermath. She muttered "So that's how it is... I need to inform Helel immediately."

Michael, Elina, Sarah and Inari suddenly appeared in a seemingly endless, pure-white room. Their damaged clothing had been repaired, and all the wounds on their bodies and fatigue had vanished.

In front of them was a two-meter tall, silver, feminine, humanoid mannequin; above its smooth and faceless head were the words "Vendor of Light, Level-??? Divine Golem, Rank-Z, End Boss." With just a glance, anyone would be able to tell that it was a being of unfathomable power.

Before any of them said anything, it spoke in a familiar, monotonous voice "Welcome to the Armory of Lux. You will enter this sanctuary after every Battleground you participate in. While you are here, even if you spend an eternity browsing my wares, in your world, it would be as if merely a moment had passed. For your flawless victory over the Human army, you will receive additional rewards. Please choose your method of payment: Fifty gold, one-hundred experience, or two-hundred Light-Favor points."

Michael asked "How much do the items cost, and can we use them if we aren't of the Light Affinity?"

The Vendor mechanically replied "No, you must be of the Light Affinity to utilize items of the Light Element. However, it is possible to purchase mana-cores of the Light Element; a rank-E level-ten mana-core from a 'Lesser Angel' would cost one-thousand Light-Favor."

Elina started biting her lower-lip, while looking down at him, but then Sarah said “We’ll take experience.”

However, the Celestial Golem told her “Companions do not have the authority to make that decision.”

She was about to start screaming at the giant mannequin, but Michael grabbed her, and placed his right hand over her mouth. Then he smiled and asked “How much does a level-ten Healing Staff cost?”

It immediately replied “All two-handed weapons have fixed prices depending on Quality and Level. Rare: two-hundred Light-Favor. Epic: one-thousand Light-Favor. Legendary: ten-thousand Light-Favor.”

He smirked and said “We’ll take a Healing Staff please.” Sarah was biting at his palm and sliding her slimy-tail up his kilt to ‘attack’ him, but he just ignored her.

Elina asked him “How can you give all of the Favor that you, Sarah and Inari worked for to me? I wasn’t even able to help either of you so far...”

Michael sighed and told her “If we pick Exp, it’d be a total waste. I can make gold relatively easily, but finding a rare weapon... that’s actually pretty hard. It’s basically random drops when killing Elites and Quests are unreliable. Most importantly, everyone knows that Healers always get to roll first; then Tanks, and DPS are always last. Doesn’t matter who did the most work. Besides, Sarah and I have two Rares, plus, Inari is basically just a dog... I mean, can she even use gear? The point is, you’re our Main-Healer, so this is an advanced payment for you to start doing your fucking job!”

## Chapter 60: Returning from the Battlefield

“Battle-Staff of Healing Light: Increases wielder’s Strength, Endurance, and Vitality by one point; increases Intelligence and Wisdom by two points. Deals Light damage upon contact with the enemy and raises Attack Rating by thirty. Doubles the Aura stat. Soulbound to Elina Jacobs and cannot be used by anyone else. Rare Quality, requires level-ten to wield.”

Holding the beautiful and unadorned white pole in her hands, Elina was completely speechless. She had never seen such an amazing piece of equipment before in her

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entire life, and she had never believed that she could actually own something so incredible.

Michael snickered and told her “What did you expect? It’s not like all Rares and Epics are gonna be the same ‘Quality’ after all. I mean, aside from the fact that it’s a level-ten item, it’s also a fucking piece of PvP gear. The shit we get from killing a miscellaneous monster that’s roaming around in the jungle, or completing an easy Quest, obviously wouldn’t be nearly as good. Also, this thing probably isn’t even that great for you, but it’s better than nothing, right?”

Elina finally came back to her senses and hugged the staff, while saying “No, this is amazing, thank you... both of you. I’ll definitely make sure to train hard, so that I can live up to your expectations!”

After that, Sarah ‘wormed’ her way out of his grasp and yelled “Damn it! What the hell is up with that anyway?! I still have no idea why I was suddenly sent there! Not that I didn’t enjoy slaughtering those fucking Humans, but you could at least tell me why!”

Michael sighed and explained “It’s called a Battleground... Look, I’ll bring up the list of ongoing and upcoming fights.” Then he shared his screen with the two of them, and they were able to see a ridiculously large amount of names, dates, times, and other important information. He continued “Basically, let’s say we wanna go and earn some Darkness Favor, right? Then we would look through this list, and pick one of the myriad of conflicts... Most of them seem to be involving various undead Clans. There are a few others here, though I don’t really see anything particularly interesting. Before anything else, we really need to grind some levels, because most of the Battlegrounds aren’t nearly as pathetic as what we just experienced.”

The Dark-Goblin sneered and muttered “Fine, whatever... I need to practice a bit more anyway.”

Then the Vendor asked the only Player in the room: “Would you like to return to your home now?”

He quickly nodded his head and said “Yeah, see ya next time.” As soon as he finished speaking, the four of them were immediately teleported back to their original positions.

Inari was hunting for food in the jungle, Sarah was standing next to a Human skeleton, and the other two were sitting on Michael’s balcony. He smiled at the happy cat-girl,

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who was still tightly hugging her new staff, and asked “Do you wanna talk to your mother?”

She furrowed her brows and said “Of course I do, but unless you can teleport us back to Luxiana, I probably won’t be able to see her for a long time.”

Michael snickered and then opened up his Continental Map, poking his finger towards the tiny village and receiving a notification: “Would you like to Fast-Travel to Luxiana? Costs four gold and twenty-nine silver.”

Seeing that, Elina gasped, but then complained “It’s amazing, but way too expensive...”

Then he said “Nah, it’s not that much money; literally a silver per mile. Even when we can fly or teleport around using magic, it’d still be a lot easier to just Fast-Travel there for a few gold. Anyway, you don’t have to be there to talk to her, right? Just open up your ‘Chat’ menu, and she should be one of your contacts... Here, I’ll show you.”

Once she figured it out, she asked “Hello, Mom, can you hear me?” Elina smiled at Michael and mouthed “Thank you.” as she stood up and carried her staff into the bedroom. She didn’t actually have to speak out-loud, but she thought it would have been awkward having a conversation with her mother in front of him.

He smirked and muttered “After the battle, my Stamina went back up to full, so I guess that means I could potentially just keep spamming them and never sleep. Well, it still feels like I’ve been awake for a whole damn week, but I guess I’ll just get used to that eventually. Hmmm~, I really need to learn more about magic.”

“Introduction to the Arcane Arts” suddenly appeared in his hands, and Michael began reading where he left off. There were a few other methods to cultivate Aura, but he skipped past them, and skimmed over the Vocal Magic section.

Charm, Intimidation, Enthrall, Confusion, Nausea, Deafening Noise, and other similar spells were described in great detail. Then he read something rather interesting at the end: “Vocal Magic becomes much more effective when combining them with Ocular techniques.”

That was essentially the segway into the Ocular Spells portion of the book. Michael muttered “So basically, I just need to channel mana into my eyes and voice at the same time, while thinking about what I want to happen. Ugh~, so fucking vague... Is that how magic works in this world? Just imagine it, and bam, poof, shit happens? Nah~, it can’t

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be that simple, or I would be able to do all kinds of crazy nonsense. Ah, well, I can't really practice any of these spells, unless I have some kinda test-subject."

Thus, he moved onto Physical Enhancement; he immediately realized "Holy shit, these are all buffs... Let's see if they actually work." There were breathing techniques and various other simple ways to have the mana to reinforce the body, but all of that was unnecessary for Players.

After reading for a few hours about each of the individual spells, he gained a skill: "Stat-Boost Level 1: Channels Arcane-Mana into the target and increases all base stats by one point: Does not affect Willpower, Luck or Aura. Duration depends on the Aura stat. Costs ten mana per target."

Michael snickered and said "Sweet~, now it's time to learn about electricity... but first, I need to piss. Actually, I should probably make some tea as well. Oh yeah, I forgot to buy pots, and pans, and pretty much everything else that I need. Fuck my life, I'll just have to settle for water... unless~."

He went outside and urinated in the thick foliage outside the southern side of his house, then crossed the rapidly flowing river. The Human began casually picking oranges, apples, limes and pomegranates from various trees: shoving them into four different bag-slots.

However, when he walked to the western side of the orchard, he started hearing voices. Michael grumbled "Shit, I didn't think anyone was actually living here... Well, I didn't receive a notification about not being able to store items that don't belong to me. It's still pretty douche-y though, ugh, I should still ask their permission first. Life would be so much easier if I was a complete asshole."

When he entered the small clearing, what he saw were two people, standing in front of a gigantic cave-mouth. Michael muttered "Somehow, I kinda doubt that these guys eat fruit."

Each of them were 'lizardmen,' but they were slightly different from the ones that he had seen in Asura. Their entire humanoid bodies were covered in orange scales, with ankles and feet that appeared similar to a velociraptor's or bird's; while their heads were more similar to a tyrannosaurus, with fluffy bright-red feathers for hair.

It wasn't the features that were strange though, but the size. They glanced down at the relatively tiny man, from a height that was at least six-meters. One of them was a

female, the other a male: He could easily tell, because they weren't wearing clothes, and their reproductive systems seemed more Human than reptile.

The two of them didn't have any weapons or armor, but with such high base-stats, they weren't a race that usually needed to worry about predators. Above the lizard-girl's head were the words "Julia the Striker, Level-17 Tyrannosaurus-Tribe Boxer, Rank-E," while the man's read "Kyle the Grappler, Level-19 Tyrannosaurus-Tribe Wrestler, Rank-E."

Michael couldn't help but complain "What's the deal with the names of people in this world anyway? It's like they're just picked at random, from dozens of languages. Well, maybe most of the Players who were brought into this world, were from America. Actually, why does everyone speak English? Hmmm, it's also possible that there's some sort of universal language. I mean, I've definitely said and heard words that aren't technically English, so who the fuck knows? I'll just ask Arcana next time..."

While he was talking to himself, Kyle turned to the lizard-girl and asked "What should we do? He's only level-nine, but it's rare for Humans to make it to rank-F. I've never seen a person with so many titles before either; hell, even the Patriarch only has three, and he's a damn dragon."

Julia snickered and said "He's kinda cute... why don't we invite him inside? Alice has been complaining about being lonely for a while now; maybe she'll cheer up if we give her a new 'toy' to play with?"

## Chapter 61: The Girl Next Door Is a Dinosaur

Michael asked the two giant lizard-people "Oh hi, umm, do the two of you own that orchard?" as he unhesitantly walked towards them, while pointing backwards with his right thumb.

The man chuckled and told him "Yeah... they aren't food though. Our daughter is a bit, well, odd; she uses the fruit and some other stuff to make soap. I honestly don't understand why she would need to though."

Julia sighed, then explained "Well, she was just born with a stronger sense of smell than us. Anyway, would you like to meet her? Alice is a good girl, she just doesn't leave home very often... I think we were probably just a little too overprotective when she was younger."

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Kyle said “Yeah, actually, I’m kinda amazed that you haven’t tried to run away. I mean, it’s not like we get many Humans around here, but the few I’ve met would always flee the moment they saw us, hahaha~.”

The ‘tiny’ man snickered and quietly muttered “Probably because your dick is almost bigger than my entire body...” but then asked “Is it really okay for you to invite a complete stranger into your home? I mean, we are neighbors, but still... aren’t you worried that I might try to kill you?”

However, the giant scale-covered man, flexed his bulky muscles and told him “If you weren’t so weak, I probably would have eaten you already. Besides, do you seriously think that you could hurt me? You don’t have any weapons on you, and as far as I can tell, you don’t even have a Class. Actually, how the hell did you even reach rank-F without a Class?”

Michael smirked, then said “I still haven’t decided on one yet.” as he followed the two colossal lizard-people into their lair. Each step that the massive humanoids took, made him feel like the cave was going to collapse around them.

Then the lizard-woman boasted “Our daughter is a genius! Like most of our tribe, she was born with Fire Affinity, but when she was only ten years old, she actually managed to receive the blessings of Aqua as well! Hehehe, she’s also a level-nine Alchemist!”

Kyle complained “Hmph! That brat inherited the blood of our mighty Tyrannosaurus-Tribe, and she’s never once tried to exercise! All she does is complain about how ugly she thinks she is, or how she wishes her body was smaller! Can you believe that she actually chose to learn magic, rather than become a proud Warrior like her parents?!”

Even if Michael wanted to get a bit taller by evolving... he still wouldn’t want to be six meters tall. With such a huge frame, he wouldn’t even be able to use his house anymore: though he only bought it the day before.

The inside of the cave was gigantic, but it only took the massive couple a few large strides to reach a colossal stone door. Compared to the two of them, that gateway was at least twice as large, and just as wide.

Julia knocked on the surface a few times and shouted “Alice, Honey, open the door!” Her voice was so loud that Michael had to use his hands to cover his ears, and it felt like his internal organs were going to explode from the vibrations.



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There was no response from the other side, so Kyle unhesitantly pushed on one side of the giant slab of brown rock. It swiftly turned and there was enough room for both of them to enter at the same time; Michael followed, but it took him a lot longer to make it inside.

They were within a ridiculously large and empty caldera, which was likely once filled with magma, but there was actually a huge hole in the ceiling. As he glanced around, the tiny man saw a colossal cauldron, along with many gigantic glass, metal and stone containers, filled with vast quantities of various liquids.

The lighting was great, since the sun was shining directly down into the room, but there was also a massive pool of water on one side of the room. On the other end was a much smaller pool of what appeared to be molten lava.

Michael snickered and then asked “Is she using some kinda invisibility spell?” However, right at that moment, an enormous azure tyrannosaurus-head emerged from the soapy water.

She had neon orange feathers instead of hair, and her eyes were red: the same as her parents. Alice stared at the strange creature that was slowly walking towards her, then glanced over at Kyle and Julia for a few moments, before submerging herself again.

Seeing that, the giant woman sighed and said “I’m sorry, she’s just a little shy... You’re actually the only person besides us, that she’s ever met before. As you can imagine, we don’t really get many visitors around here.”

Suddenly the fur armor that Michael had been wearing, melted into his skin and turned into a series of tiger-tattoos. He carefully dipped his toes into the warm water and then jumped in.

It wasn’t until he was actually inside, that he realized how ridiculously deep it was. There was also another problem, which actually intensified after his bones and muscles became denser: He couldn’t swim.

As the small Human continued to sink rapidly, he didn’t panic because he noticed that as his Stamina increased, so did his lung capacity. Before entering the water, he had enough air to last him for at least six minutes.

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It wasn't that he didn't know how to swim, just that his buoyancy was terrible. Michael could move around underwater relatively easily, it was just difficult for him to stay on the surface.

However, those problems were before he gained access to 'Telekinesis' and his extra-dimensional bag. He swam around in the surprisingly clear water for a few moments, before he finally saw the 'camouflaged' lizard-girl at the bottom of the pool.

Without his armor, his Defense Rating was only three points, but that was still fairly high. The water-pressure he experienced on the bottom, did cause him a bit of discomfort, but it wasn't painful or harmful.

Michael could immediately tell that the giant blue woman was at least a meter taller than her parents, but her musculature was much more lanky than either of them. She was staring at him, while sitting on the pitch-black floor, and casually breathing through the gills on the sides of her neck.

After a few seconds he opened up his 'Chat' menu, and found her name on his contact-list. Then, he 'Whispered' her: "Nice title... pft."

Above the giantess' head was written "Alice the Neet, Level-3 Tyrannosaurus-Tribe Elementalist, rank-G."

Hearing the telepathic communication, she immediately responded "Who are you and what do you want from me? Why did my parents let you in here?"

He snickered and mentally said "What, you can't use the 'Identification' spell? Oh yeah, I forgot that I was way higher level than you... Hmmm~, my name is Michael the Immortal and I just came to pay you for the fruit I stole from your orchard. Well, I doubt that someone like you would be interested in normal currency. I have a level-two, rank-F, Bloodworm carcass, but it doesn't have a mana-core; you interested?"

Alice complained "Fine, but why are you in my room? Couldn't you have just given it to my parents?"

Michael sighed, releasing a decent amount of bubbles from his mouth, then told her "I definitely heard your mother say something about giving you a new 'toy' to play with..."

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She screamed “Are you a complete idiot!? Why didn’t you run away after hearing something like that?! The last time they brought me a ‘toy,’ I was nearly eaten by a Bengal Tiger!”

The relatively small man started snickering and asked “How the hell could a little tiger eat you? Even if your level is low, you should still be able to kill one of those pretty easily.”

Alice yelled “I was ‘terrified’ and couldn’t even move! How do you even fight something like that?! Anyway, there’s a small passage that leads to the other caves behind me, so take that and leave! If you stay here, my parents are literally going to eat you...”

Michael smirked and told her “Nah, it’s fine~; even if they kill me, I can’t really die. Sure, it’ll definitely suck, but it can’t be worse than my last death. Ugh, just thinking about it is making me feel sick. Oh wait, never-mind, I’m just suffocating now... Umm, do you think you could help me out? Shit, damn it, fuck, I’m uh, dying really quickly.”

It had been nearly five minutes and his Health suddenly began falling rapidly. His last thoughts were “Gah, how the hell is this realistic!?” as he abruptly ‘drowned’ without even breathing in a lung-full of water.

## Chapter 62: Lucky Twenty-One

“New Title: Shinigami. Most people fear death and are willing to sacrifice their dignity, honor or even their family to preserve their own lives. There are others who embrace their eventual demise and think of it as a final release from their tormented existence. However, you are a Player, and as long as your Willpower holds out, you could potentially die thousands of times without ever moving on from this world. The Goddesses have decided to reward you for your perseverance by increasing your Luck and Willpower by seven points.”

Michael also received another notification upon his sudden-death: “You have acquired Poison Resistance Level 1: Resists level one poisons and toxins.”

In the form of a pitch-black wisp, he started laughing hysterically and then yelled “So that’s what happened! Also, holy shit! Ah, I should go gambling again soon!”

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Grabbing the tiny Human corpse in her palm, Alice quickly swam to the surface and placed him down onto the dry ground. The skin all over his body had become bright-red and his lips were blue, while the eyes turned completely white.

She yelled at her parents “What’s wrong with the two of you?!” It was the third person that she had ever met in her entire life, and she was only able to talk to him for a few moments before he died: due to the poison that was being secreted by her own body.

Kyle sighed and said “How is this our fault? We didn’t tell the dumb-ass to jump into the water. He seemed like a pretty nice guy too... Well, whatever, at least you can probably make something interesting out of the corpse, right?”

Julia scolded him “Don’t be so insensitive!” before grumbling “Damn it, I thought that guy would be able to finally convince our daughter to go outside...”

However, at that moment, Michael materialized between the three gigantic lizard-people and said “Why doesn’t anyone ever believe me when I tell them that I’m immortal? Well, whatever, you can keep my corpse as payment for the fruit, hehe~.”

Obviously, the entire family was surprised and amazed at the strange creature before them. Kyle yelled “It’s gotta be a trick!” as he looked by and forth between the corpse and the naked man.

Then Alice asked “How did you do that?” as she was attempting to carefully examine the rapidly dissolving pile of flesh and bone.

He explained “It’s simple... I don’t wanna die, so the Goddesses create a new body for me: or something like that? Well, whatever, it’s way too hot in here for me, and I’ve got shit to do, so I’m gonna go home now. It’s been nice meeting you guys, and if you wanna drop by, my house is near the waterfall... Adios.” His tiger-fur kilt, boots and belt almost instantaneously appeared on his body as he started walking towards the exit.

When Michael left the room, the two curious dinosaurs followed after him, while the Neet remained in her lair, closing the door behind them. Once they were outside, Julia said “Wait, since when was that building there?”

He snickered and told them “Ah, yeah, I just moved in last night.” as he Unequipped his clothes to cross the river.

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Kyle started laughing and said “You’re a really strange Human... not that I know any other Humans. Well, take as much fruit as you need, since our daughter could never use it all anyway.”

Michael was surprised at how friendly the gigantic lizard-people were, and when he was finally out of earshot, he muttered “Their Intelligence must be really fucking low...” That actually wasn’t the case; it was simply a difference in culture.

The Tyrannosaurus-Tribe rarely interacted with other races, and their own philosophy revolved around solving all of their problems with brute-force. Deceit, subterfuge, and all manner of trickery were completely unnecessary for creatures that were essentially, gigantic anthropomorphic-dinosaurs.

When her parents gave Alice that tiger, it was equivalent to a Human giving their child a kitten to play with. They never meant for her to be so scared that she locked herself up in their cave for ten years and refused to go outside.

Once Michael returned home, he Equipped his ‘armor’ and was greeted by a cheerful cat-girl: “Where did you go?” She wasn’t too worried about him, even after she received a message saying that her Companion had died.

He snickered and said “I was just saying ‘hi’ to the neighbors. Geeze, you should put that thing away in your inventory; ya can’t even use it until level-ten, so what’s the point in carrying it around?”

Elina was holding her ‘divine’ staff with both hands and smiling, as she shook her head. “No, I’m never going to let go of it!”

Michael sighed, “Seriously... what about when you have to piss or shit?”

The cat-girl scowled and told him “Okay, I did put it away a few times, but I need to keep holding it as much as possible. Ugh, it’s going to take at least a week, but I’m trying to Enchant it with ‘Lesser Intelligence.’ That’s basically-”

He interjected “Let me guess; it raises Intelligence by one point?”

Elina shook her head and proudly corrected him, “Nope, it increases by ten percent!”

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Michael started laughing and walked inside the brightly-illuminated house, while saying “So it would raise your Intelligence by less than one point... Anyway~, I was just out picking some fruit from the orchard across the river, but then I noticed that we have neighbors.”

The pouting Priestess smirked, “Let ‘me’ guess; did these neighbors kill you?”

However, he sighed and revealed “Nope, I was an idiot and went swimming in a pool of acidic poison. That obviously didn’t turn out so well, but then I got this awesome title!”

When she saw the description, then how his Willpower and Luck had increased to twenty-one each, the cat-girl scowled. Yet, after a few moments, she gazed at him with an expression of pity, and asked “Aren’t you even slightly worried about going insane from being resurrected so many times?”

Michael shook his head and confidently replied “Nah, I’m already pretty crazy as it is. Besides, when I hear voices in this world, they’re actually real. Also, I’ve had a bunch of Goblin ghosts haunting me for a few days now... not sure how long that’s gonna last.”

Suddenly, a message appeared: “Inari has learned the spell Entangle Level 1: Creates or manipulates vines, which wrap around the enemy’s legs. Root duration is dependent on the Aura stat. Only works when in natural environments.”

After reading that, he immediately checked her status and noticed that her experience had gone up to 56/70. When he searched for her on the map, he muttered “Holy hell, she’s gotta be running at least sixty miles-per-hour. Ugh, just thinking about it is making me nauseous...”

Michael smirked, then turned to the cat-girl and asked “Since you refuse to store your special stick, do you want me to feed you?” An orange-slice suddenly appeared in his right hand, and he nonchalantly shoved it into Elina’s mouth, before she had the chance to answer him.

She chewed it a bit and swallowed, before saying “Ah~, it’s been so long since I actually had real food.” He then pulled another piece out of his inventory and ate it.

However, his reaction was a bit different: “Hmmm, it’s kinda bitter, probably wasn’t ripe yet? Oh wait, these aren’t oranges, they’re grapefruits... Well, they’re still better than drinking water.”

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Michael discovered that he could not just skin them, but also remove the juice from various different plants, by manipulating the extra-dimensional bag. Unfortunately, he didn't buy any glasses or cups when he was in town, so it was simpler to just eat slices or pieces of the fruit.

Without thinking too much about it, he abruptly cast 'Stat-Boost' and was enveloped in a rainbow of different colors. After that, it jumped to the cat-girl who was standing in front of him, and the skill actually increased to level-two.

His Mana dropped to 10/30 and Elina yelled "W-what is this ridiculous spell?! It actually increased all my stats by a point!"

The half-naked man obviously had no idea why she was so flustered, because it just seemed like a basic buff to him. Michael sighed and grumbled "Ugh, it leveled up and the stat-increase doubled, but so did the mana-cost. Hmmm~, I need to raise my Intelligence next time I level-up."

Then he remembered that he didn't have his Arcane Orb Equipped, which added a point of Intelligence and Wisdom. He ignored the Priestess and walked upstairs to his balcony, where he began to study the overpowered art of 'Electrical Manipulation.'

## Chapter 63: Skill-Books Are Overpowered

Lightning wasn't a 'Primal Element,' because electricity could be used and created by all Affinities in various ways. However, Arcane was by far the simplest, since it involved transforming mana directly into electrical energy.

Michael was leaning his back against the wooden railing, while holding a crystalline book in his left hand, and squeezing a glowing rubber-like ball in his right. Even though he loved reading and writing fiction in his original world, he had never enjoyed studying or researching. Fortunately, from his perspective, any story that involved magic was considered part of the 'Fantasy' genre.

He immediately learned something very important, which should have been extremely obvious: "Arcane weapons and armor can be used as a battery to store electrical energy. It is crucial that the caster never attempts to create or channel any amount of lightning-magic through their own body."

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Squeezing the ball in his hand tightly, Michael snickered, “Oh yeah, that actually makes a lot more sense. Hmmm~, how the hell do I charge this thing without electrocuting myself?”

Magic mainly consisted of using the caster’s imagination and intentions, to manipulate mana in various ways. As he channeled his aura into the Arcane Orb, it started vibrating and pulsating, while emitting an extremely irritating humming noise.

Michael stood up, then looked down a miscellaneous giant purple cockroach that was slowly creeping around the front of his house. It wasn’t a magical-beast, but just a dog-sized insect that was trying to enter his home.

In fact, he even heard Elina scream “Ah~! No, go away!” which was a fairly reasonable response to such a situation. He sighed, and then threw the ‘charged’ Arcane Orb, which made an incredibly loud ‘zap’ sound upon contact with the creature’s exoskeleton.

A massive ‘-42’ appeared, instantly killing the giant bug; immediately after that, a ‘-7’ popped-up and the ‘monster’ abruptly exploded, but didn’t reward him with any experience-points. However, a skill was created: “Electrical Charge Level 1: Temporarily enchants an Arcane weapon, allowing it to deal additional lightning-damage for one attack. Damage and mana-cost are equivalent to the Aura stat.”

The cat-girl shrieked, and then shouted “You could have at least warned me first!” Fortunately, she managed to close the door before the cockroach erupted: spraying purple fluids everywhere.

However, before any of the debris could approach the house, it was stopped by an invisible barrier and repelled outwards with a decent amount of force. Michael muttered “Well, that explains why this place is still in such good condition, even after being abandoned in the jungle for hundreds or thousands of years.”

In fact, Player-Homes were nearly indestructible, regardless of how they appeared. Even if an asteroid crashed into his roof, it would just disintegrate, without breaking a single tile.

After catching the glowing ball, he tried to utilize another aspect of his newly acquired spell. Holding the Arcane Orb in his right hand, he held it out and aimed at an empty patch of land, close to the riverbank.



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The first step was channeling mana into the sphere, then he yelled “Lightning Bolt!” and a tiny stream of electricity was fired towards the location he specified. It made a relatively quiet crackling noise, as it struck a grey rock and dissipated. Michael sighed dramatically, then muttered “Fuck my life... Well, I guess this is fine for now.”

He received a spell called “Electrostatic Discharge Level 1: Releases the stored energy from an Arcane weapon, creating a lightning-bolt to strike the designated target. Damage and mana-cost are equivalent to the Aura stat.”

Compared to the kind of ‘skill-books’ that he had remembered from many video-games, the one in his left hand seemed to be a lot more effective. While he couldn’t just touch it and magically learn an ability, by having access to a huge wealth of knowledge, Michael was able to learn a myriad of useful spells.

It was mostly filler, history and theory, but by skipping through all the unimportant parts, he was able to pick out many of the actual techniques fairly easily. However, aside from ‘Electrostatic Discharge’ and ‘Electrical Charge,’ all of the other spells under Electrical Manipulation were derived from them and could only be learned after leveling the two skills considerably.

Telepathic Communication was completely pointless, considering that he already had access to a much more powerful version that didn’t even cost him any mana. It was typically a precursor to Mental Fortitude, which describes a training routine to steadily raise the Willpower stat over the course of many years.

Skipping those two sections, Michael was able to start reading about Illusory Combat. As the name suggested, it was the essence of Arcane offensive magic.

Unfortunately, it was impossible to practice or truly ‘learn’ any of the spells without a living target to experiment on. Taking the acoustic guitar out of his inventory, he walked into his bedroom and placed it in the corner, gently laying it onto the floor.

Michael smirked as he opened up his ‘Zone-Map’ and said “Hehe~, spending two silver to Fast-Travel, or walking for two miles through a jungle... Well, let’s see what happens!”

The instant his money disappeared, the space around his body suddenly warped, and when his senses returned to normal, he was standing next to that gigantic bright-blue tree. He immediately removed the “Introduction to the Arcane Arts” from his inventory, and held it in his left hand, while clutching the glowing orb in his right.

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The Entrance to the Forgotten Grotto was very close to the 'Tiger-Zone' that he was familiar with, so it was the perfect training-grounds. It only took him a few minutes before he found a 'test-subject.'

Michael yelled "Here kitty-kitty-kitty~!" and was accompanied by a ferocious bestial roar. He had managed to attract the fury of a rank-G, level-9 Bengal Tiger.

Even though it was impossible for the creature to affect him with any sort of mental attack, he still aimed his Arcane Orb at the oncoming stream of mana and created a barrier out of his own aura, to block it. While it wasn't particularly useful to use when soloing, he was determined to become a 'Tank,' and needed ways to protect his weak-minded Healer.

A message popped-up: "You have learned Illusory Shield Level 1: Creates a thin layer of condensed aura, which can be used to negate a single mental attack. Uses the Aura stat to temporarily reinforce the target's Willpower. Costs five mana-points if used on the caster, ten when cast on a Companion."

He complained "Fucking hell... everything costs so much damn mana!" After casting his level-two 'Stat-Boost' buff, Michael had dropped down to 20/45 MP.

Fortunately, with the increase in Wisdom, he was regenerating eighty per minute. However, the raging tiger wasn't just going to sit there and wait for him to read and test out the various spells.

As the magical-beast pounced towards him, he swiftly sidestepped to the left and used his right hand to punch directly into its rib-cage. With the Arcane Orb in his grip, he thought that it would double his damage... but was immediately disappointed, when a '-27' appeared.

The force of his strike, actually caused the tiger to flip around mid-air and smack into a large purple tree. After that impact, it did receive another fifteen points of damage, yet his weapon's effect wasn't triggered.

Michael grumbled "Guess I have to actually touch the damn thing against the bastard, or it just counts as a physical attack, huh?" He casually walked over to the dead beast and shoved it into his bag before storing his book.

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Then he pulled the beast's orange mana-core out and stared at it for a few seconds, before muttering "I'm probably gonna regret this..." and swallowing it. The moment he said "Hmmm~, maybe it won't hurt this time?" a searing pain permeated his entire body.

Squeezing the rubbery ball in his hand to relieve some of the stress, he screamed "Grah~! Ow, shit, grrr~, ow, ummm~, it's gonna be okay... Ugh, nope, it was a bad idea, a fucking horrible idea!"

The amount of damage to his internal organs wasn't too bad, but the level of suffering was still quite excruciating. Then he finally received the notification: "Stats have increased after digesting a level-nine, rank 'G' Bengal Tiger's mana--core: Aura +.9, Vitality +.5, Agility +1."

[Player Information

Name: Michael

Titles: The Nudist, The Noob, The Immortal, The Lurker, The Survivor, The Astronaut, Shinigami

Level: 9

Experience: 24/90

Age: Adult

Race: Human

Rank: F

Class: None

Specialization: None

Profession: Leatherworker Level 3]

[Stats

Health: 53/75

Mana: 24/45

Stamina: 27/40

Mana Regen per minute: 60{+20}

Health Regen per hour: 50{+20}

Strength: 6{+2}

Vitality: 5{+2}

Endurance: 6{+2}

Dexterity: 3{+2}

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Agility: 6(+2){+2}  
Intelligence: 5(+2){+2}  
Wisdom: 4(+2){+2}  
Perception: 4{+2}  
Charisma: 2{+2}

Willpower: 21  
Luck: 21  
Aura: 7.8

Attack Power: 30(+11.5){+10}  
Defense Rating: 3(+7){+1}

## Chapter 64: Players Always Have the Most Skills

Michael had to reapply his 'Stat-Boost' buff every seven minutes, but the cost was a static twenty-points of mana. Essentially, it was very inefficient at low levels, but as his Aura stat increased, so did the duration.

After thirty minutes, the agony from consuming the mana-core had receded and he began searching for a new test-subject to experiment on. While reading the holographic words that were floating above the book in his left hand, he muttered "Okay~, so I guess a monkey is better than nothing..."

Slowly walking with its fists against the ground, there was a level-eight, rank-G, Silverback Gorilla glaring at him from a few dozen meters away. Michael smiled at it and yelled "Oi, Asshole! You gonna fight me or what?!"

His 'Taunt' skill reached level-two and the ape was immediately enraged by the irritating Human, who arbitrarily invaded its territory. The beast let out a 'Deafening Roar,' but it had no effect on him, so it became even more furious.

As the gorilla charged, Michael aimed the glowing ball in his hand and shouted "Arcane Bolt!" as an incredibly fast blob of prismatic mana was fired towards the creature's

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relatively large body. However, even after the attack hit, it only dealt seven points of damage.

Since the Silverback had 53/60 HP left, he pitched his orb at the beast's face. Even though it tried to dodge, its Agility and Perception weren't very high, so by the time it even noticed the attack, it was already too late.

However, even after being struck in the nose, there was no physical damage, but the creature was certainly even more furious with the smirking man. When the ape finally arrived in front of him, Michael took a few quick steps around the side of the relatively large gorilla and said "Tag~, you're dead." as he tapped his glowing ball against its right shoulder.

As the beast that was swinging its fist forwards, in an attempt to strike the evasive Human, had its Health reach zero: dying instantaneously. He placed the carcass into bag-slot eleven, while looking at his newly acquired skill: "Arcane Bolt Level 1: Launches a single ball of the caster's aura towards the enemy, homing in on the target's mana and dealing Arcane-damage. Damage and mana-cost are equivalent to the Aura stat."

Aside from those two spells, everything else under the 'Illusory Combat' section required him to have reached a certain degree of mastery in those two abilities first. Thus, he moved onto what was probably the part that he looked forward to the most: 'Telekinetic Training.'

He had already been playing around the the skill enough to reach level-three, but he could only use it by forcing his mana into inanimate objects. Essentially, there were a myriad of different techniques which he had no idea how to utilize, until reading that instruction manual.

Telekinesis at low levels was only usable on objects that he could first physically touch and imbue with his aura, then he would be able to manipulate them. It was a skill that was extremely flexible, allowing him to move ridiculously heavy objects, assuming that he had enough mana.

He could also use it as a weapon and throw projectiles at unreasonably fast speeds, but it was also incredibly inefficient: unless it was used on Arcane items. However, there were other spells as well, ones which could be used directly against enemies.

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Finding a level-nine Bengal Tiger, Michael couldn't help but laugh as he attempted a particularly important ability for any Tank to have. The beast wasn't particularly interested in the Human and casually strolled by, so he had plenty of time to put away his book and then mentally prepare for what he was about to do.

After a few seconds, he muttered "I really wanna say it, but I probably shouldn't..." then yelled "Come... over here!" Pitching the Arcane orb at the big-cat's left hind-leg, it didn't deal any damage upon impact, but all of that mana was used to adhere to the creature's aura, and then he was able to yank the six-hundred pound tiger towards his body.

It was a spell that seemed absurdly overpowered, considering how low the cost to use it was, but techniques like 'Shadow-Step' were even more ridiculous. However, once the beast was flying through the air and about to hit him, he was thankful that he didn't pull it by the head.

Since the tiger was falling towards him backwards, it obviously wasn't able to launch a counterattack. He grabbed it by the tail with both hands, shouting "How the hell is eight Strength this ridiculous!?" as he used the momentum to swing the entire cat into a miscellaneous bright-orange tree.

A '-31' appeared, and the beast's neck was actually broken. The animal was unable to move and was on the brink of death anyway, so he telekinetically pulled the Arcane Orb back into his right palm, and used the other skill.

With a powerful throw, the glowing ball smacked into tiger's ribs, but didn't deal the normal forty or so damage. Instead, it was basically the opposite of the first technique he used on the feline test-subject.

If the orb had been made out of steel, it probably would have penetrated into the tiger's chest, or at least impacted the specific area that he targeted. However, the nature of the spell that he was using had influenced the entire body at the same time, causing it to actually be torn in half by the relatively thin but sturdy tree, as both sides continued to be pushed forward for a few meters.

Michael started laughing hysterically, and yelled "Wow, wrecked~!" as he walked over to the pieces of the carcass and sent them into his inventory. As the orb returned to his hand naturally, he muttered "How the hell does this thing never get dirty?"

Both of his new spells were very similar to each-other, and he even complained "I bet the person who wrote these descriptions just copy-pasted them and changed a few

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words...” Then he opened his skill-list, grumbling “This is starting to get pretty ridiculous, and this is just the fucking basics? Ugh, why do Sarah and Elina only have a handful of abilities, when I have like two pages? Hell, the system even started categorizing them!”

[Spellbook

(Vocal Magic)

Taunt Level 2: After channeling mana into the vocal cords, the caster loudly curses and swears at the target, forcing them to blindly attack. Effectiveness depends on relative level. Potency is dependent on the Aura and Willpower stats.

Deafening Noise Level 3: Create a high-pitched and extremely loud sound, infused with mana. Every point of mana is equivalent to one meter of range. Potency is dependent on the Aura stat.

Intimidation Level 3: Instill fear into the target by releasing killing intent and using threatening language, infused with mana. Effectiveness is dependent on the Level difference between the caster and the target. Potency is dependent on the Charisma stat.

Enthrall Level 2: Charm the target by speaking in a calm and gentle voice, infused with mana. Able to remove fear-related debuffs from friendly targets. Effectiveness is dependent on the Level difference between the caster and the target. Potency is dependent on the Charisma stat.

(Ocular Magic)

Scan Level 3: Identifies the object and gives detailed information. Only effective on items below the rare quality and the caster’s current Level.

(Physical Enhancement)

Stat-Boost Level 2: Channels Arcane-Mana into the target and increases all base stats by two points: Does not affect Willpower, Luck or Aura. Duration depends on the Aura stat. Costs twenty mana per target.

(Electrical Manipulation)

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Electrocution Level 1: Transforms mana directly into alternating current and channels it through the caster's body, dealing lightning damage to enemies that are in physical contact with the caster's skin. Potency is dependent on the Willpower stat.

Electrical Charge Level 1: Temporarily enchants an Arcane weapon, allowing it to deal additional lightning-damage for one attack. Damage and mana-cost are equivalent to the Aura stat.

Electrostatic Discharge Level 1: Releases the stored energy from an Arcane weapon, creating a lightning-bolt to strike the designated target. Damage and mana-cost are equivalent to the Aura stat.

(Mental Magic)

Illusory Shield Level 1: Creates a thin layer of condensed aura, which can be used to negate a single mental attack. Uses the Aura stat to temporarily reinforce the target's Willpower. Costs five mana-points if used on the caster, ten when cast on a Companion.

Arcane Bolt Level 1: Launches a single ball of the caster's aura towards the enemy, homing in on the target's mana and dealing Arcane-damage. Damage and mana-cost are equivalent to the Aura stat.

Telekinesis Level 3: Manipulate objects by infusing them with mana. Potency is dependent on the Aura stat.

Arcane Pull Level 1: Infuses an Arcane weapon with the caster's mana, and upon impact, adheres to the target's aura. Once attached, the target's weight will be reduced by fifty-percent, and using physical Strength, the caster can pull the target towards him or herself. Can be used on enemies or allies and deals no damage to either. Mana-cost is equivalent to the Strength stat.

Arcane Force Level 1: Infuses an Arcane weapon with the caster's mana, and upon impact, adheres to the target's aura. Once attached, the target's weight will be reduced by fifty-percent, and using physical Strength, the caster can push the target away from themselves. Can be used on enemies or allies and deals no damage to either. Mana-cost is equivalent to the Strength stat.]



## Chapter 65: Transcending OP-ness

After urinating, Michael decided that it was time to Fast-Travel back to his house. However, he noticed that there was no price to access the 'Return Home' feature.

Obviously, when he was only a few miles away, it wasn't a big deal, but that essentially meant he could instantly transport himself back from anywhere. For instance, if he was freezing to death in the horrible void outside of the planet's atmosphere, he could teleport back home before dying.

Although, that was assuming he could access that feature, while suffering from various debuffs, and that there was no distance limitation. At least, that's what he thought, but when he activated the 'Return Home' function, it wasn't instantaneous.

Michael complained "Oh for fuck's sake... Teleport faster please~?" as the space around his body was very slowly beginning to distort. The entire process was actually only taking less than a second, but he was experiencing a whole hour of waiting.

While he was within the bubble, he Unequipped his Arcane Orb and started reading the last section of his skill-book: "Transcendence." When he appeared in his living-room, he yelled "Holy shit! Hahaha~, I knew it!"

Hearing that shout, the Priestess meditating on her balcony quickly opened her eyes and looked down at the half-naked man who was walking out the back-door. She asked "Did you really have to spend four silvers just to travel a few miles?"

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Elina wasn't able to access his currency-tab, but she did see where he Fast-Traveled to. He looked up towards her and then suddenly vanished, reappearing to her left and saying "Ah, it doesn't actually cost anything to 'Return Home,' but yeah, why would I walk if I have another option?"

She yelped and jumped backwards, almost falling over the railing, as he received his most anticipated spell: "Astral Step Level 1: During Astral Projection, the caster immediately teleports to the location of their incorporeal astral-form. Costs 100% of the caster's maximum Mana."

The surprised cat-girl was clutching the white-rod against her chest as she yelled "What's wrong with you?! Wait, more importantly, how did you do that?! Is that the 'Return Home' thing you were talking about?!"

Michael sighed and shook his head, explaining "Nah~, this is the skill I just learned, hehe~. I can't tell if it's really overpowered or completely useless though... Well, it's definitely convenient, but I can't really use it in combat."

Unlike NPCs, who would have to spend their entire lives struggling to understand the profoundness of the Arcane technique 'Astral Projection,' he had it from the very beginning. In fact, his version was a great deal more impressive since it didn't have a mana-cost.

For a typical Arcane-Mage, the first level of Astral Step was nearly impossible to overcome, even if they could understand the concept behind it. Elina just sighed and told him "You really are from another world... Can you even comprehend how ridiculous you are?"

Hearing that, he smirked, then asked the Priestess "You're the ridiculous one... What the fuck are you doing anyway? Haven't you even tried to use the crafting menu? Here, I'll show you what I do when I want to make something."

Michael made a screen appear in front of the two of them, which said "Leatherworking" at the top. There were only two patterns, so he opened his bag, instantly selected five level-nine Bengal Tigers and turned them into pelts.

When the furs appeared in his right hand, Elina furrowed her brows and didn't understand what happened. Then he explained "Seriously, pay attention, this is how you craft like a professional. You take the ingredients, then use a mana-core as the fee for accessing the service, then poof."

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A pair of boots, a skirt, and a belt appeared in his right hand, immediately after the pelts had disappeared. Then he handed them over to the confused cat-girl and said “Here, I noticed that you’ve been walking around barefoot this whole time. Well, a skirt is kinda unnecessary due to the fact that you have a robe already; however, if you wear it underneath, you should still get the increase in Defense Rating and Agility bonuses. When you aren’t fighting, just Unequip it and you’ll have a cute tiger-tattoo... Although, it’ll just be covered up by your ridiculously long pubic hair anyway.”

She accepted the equipment, but asked “Wait, how did you do that? I don’t really understand...” No matter how she tried to imagine it, the menu simply wouldn’t appear.

Eventually, Michael sighed and realized the problem: Only Players could access the AICS. He told her “Never-mind~, sorry for getting your hopes up... Oh well, I guess you’ll just have to keep doing it the old fashioned way.”

His mana had completely regenerated, so he was finally able to test the limits of his newest spell. It wasn’t as if he could just imagine a place, and then instantly teleport there; his wisp-form needed to make its way over to where he wanted to go first.

With a maximum range of two miles, it still took him a few minutes to float that far. In the mean-time, he was casually talking with Elina and telling her about how he managed to learn eight new spells in a single day.

She was both envious and irritated at how she was only given seven of them, over the course of twenty-five years. However, before she had the chance to complain, he vanished.

Suddenly appearing on the roof of a rather large building, Michael snickered and then muttered “Hmmm~, time to make some money... Shit, I need to go to the fucking cashier and get a new card. Well, I’ll just wait thirty seconds for my mana to regenerate.” Unfortunately, before that, he had to reapply his ‘Stat-Boost.’

The prismatic radiance enveloped his body, and he managed to maintain his significantly increased physical and mental abilities. Then he made a pomegranate appear in his right hand, minus the skin.

As he stood there on the flat rooftop, eating that delicious fruit, he glanced around at the noisy town. The sky had already started to darken, but all of the houses, streets and stores had plenty of illumination.

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Aside from the plants and trees in the surrounding being bioluminescent, they also had torches, mana-powered glowing rocks, and light-bulbs that functioned on electricity. Of course, the electricity was mostly generated by magical means, but Michael was still happy that such technologies existed in that world.

He muttered “I guess it’s just like Earth... Even though there are places like this, I’m sure there are plenty of people on this planet who are living like those shitty Goblins were. Hehe~, thank God I’m a Player... or maybe I should be thanking Arcana? Hmmm~, now that I think about it, she’s probably constantly watching me, right? Well, whatever, it’s time to go finally complete that Quest!”

‘Avarice’ was the most ‘high-class’ out of the three casinos in the Temple of Asura, and was completely devoted to conventional gambling. There were no fighting pits or bands, but there was a very nice restaurant on the top floor, which Michael was tempted to eat at.

However, not only was his attire completely unbecoming the ‘air-conditioned’ environment, he noticed that there were an awful lot of Elves in the room. The moment he opened the roof-top door, he had garnered a decent amount of attention.

Then a five-foot tall, obsidian-skinned man, with short and curly purple hair, walked over to him and said “Excuse me sir, but this is not a place for Humans to wander around... I’m going to have to ask you to leave immediately.” while smiling wryly.

Michael started laughing, as he looked into the Dark-Elf’s bright-red eyes and complained “What a cunt.” before walking past the waiter and looking around casually. Everyone was wearing extremely expensive-looking attire: silk gowns and dresses, business suits, tuxedos, and there were even some who wore kimonos, or Mage and Priest robes.

However, he saw one person who didn’t fit in among the crowd. A High-Elven woman, who seemed particularly familiar, and not only was she a much higher level than the others, but also rank-E.

The furious waiter didn’t directly confront the man, but instead, walked over to the back-room and called for an ‘enforcer’ to deal with the problem. Michael’s eyes momentarily met with the beautiful Huntress, yet, before she was able to stand up, he vanished.

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Talia scowled and immediately sent her father a 'Wind-Whisper' message, notifying him that she had found their target. Then she stood-up, and quickly headed downstairs; by the time she arrived at the first floor gambling-hall, the Immortal man was just starting his first hand of poker.

As the bright-green leather-clad High-Elf sat down next to him, Michael snickered and asked her "Why would an 'Innocent' little-girl like you, be in a fucked-up town like this?"

## Arc 7: Another Apocalypse?

## Chapter 66: Third Encounter

Michael's crimson eyes casually glanced above the blond-haired woman's head, which displayed "Talía the Innocent, Level-16 High-Elf Huntress, Rank-E."

Her title wasn't a particularly uncommon one among her people, but it was nearly unheard of for a member of any short-lived race to obtain it. It actually had stacking benefits, but if the person violated the conditions, they would lose everything that they had built-up over the decades.

If someone could spend the first forty years of their life a virgin, and also avoid 'murdering' anyone, they would receive seven Willpower and Luck. After that, it would add an additional point every decade.

Taila scowled at him, asking "Why did you do that? Even if you didn't die, have you no fear of pain or suffering?"

With his twenty-one Luck, as long as he didn't intentionally lose, it was fairly easy to win against the androgynous Dark-Elven dealer. As he played his second game, Michael snickered and replied "Meh~, at the time, I had shit to do and I didn't want you bastards abducting me. Things are different now; even if you knock me out and take me away to some mysterious village on the other side of the world, it wouldn't make much a difference. Also, you guys insta-killed me, so it didn't even hurt."

The irritated green-eyed beauty complained "Our Goddess Aeris asked us to bring you to our village... We were only taking precautions because my father, our Captain played the Melody of Danger. If 'someone' wasn't loudly singing over it, we would have noticed that he was actually giving us the signal to stay hidden. Then you purposefully made me... Don't you even realize what you've done? If you had actually died, I would have become a murderer!"

Hearing that, he sighed and then grimaced, before saying "Ow, what the hell... Ugh, I didn't notice it early, but I think I pulled something. Umm, yup, it's my testicle, ow, fuck, damn it. Mmmm, I wonder if this is a hernia? Ouch, so this is why people don't normally try to throw around tigers..."

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While holding the cards in his right hand, Michael began unhesitantly 'correcting' the situation under his kilt, with the left. Talia yelled "What are you doing?!" as she nearly fell off of her stool.

Glaring at the Human, the dealer told him "Sir, please stop doing that; you're clearly disturbing the other patrons, and me. If there is an actual medical emergency, then I can call a Healer to treat your injuries."

After a few moments, he pulled his hand out of his kilt and cheerfully said "Nah, it's fine, just a false-alarm. My left testicle was twisted around backwards, but I fixed it. Anyway, royal straight flush, I win again. Hahaha~, gambling is pretty fun in this world!"

The Huntress glared at him, while frowning; she had obviously never met such a vulgar and obscene person in her seventy-five years of life. Of course, that was only because she lived in a High-Elven village that worshiped Aeris, and hadn't spent very long in the Temple of Asura.

Talia muttered "How much Luck does one need to keep winning like that?" as she observed her 'target.' Unlike the first casino Michael gambled in, Avarice was ironically, not nearly as corrupt.

Even as he continued to play nine flawless matches in a row, the enforcers and guards didn't make a move on him. His two gold coins were quickly turned into one hundred and twelve, but that wasn't nearly enough to cause the Elven owners to care.

Then something strange happened; as Michael won his tenth game of Poker, a bright light began emanating from his body and a 'divine' voice announced "You have reached level ten."

An incredibly dense and serene aura enveloped the entire room as a blurry and nearly invisible entity appeared behind him. The air trembled, and a feminine humanoid figure became slightly opaque.

Michael turned to face her with a smile, as he casually said "Oh hey Arcana, what's up? Ya know, I'm starting to think that you're stalking me..." Hearing and seeing that, not only Talia, but every single person in the entire room was trembling. A few people of the Arcane Affinity immediately knelt onto the ground and gazed up at her; everyone else however, were too terrified to even breathe, as they tried not to attract her attention.



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The Goddess giggled and smirked at him, then asked “Are you really satisfied with winning so easily? Perhaps you would like to play against me... This avatar has the same exact Luck stat as you, so it would be completely fair.”

He snickered and complained “That’s a joke right? You’re the one who influences Luck, so you would definitely have the advantage.” She was pouting in discontent, so he suggested “Why don’t we play without Luck? You can pick the game.”

Arcane suddenly made a mysterious glass coin appear in her right palm, then told him “You would have originally received a Rare level-five shield for the Quest-Reward. However, if you’re willing to bet with that item, I’ll bet this token... With this, you will be able to enter the Arcane Armory and trade it for any piece of equipment that is worth two-hundred Favor.”

Michael said “Is it PvE or PvP gear? Never-mind, it doesn’t matter. Of course I would accept that offer... but~, we’re going to play one-hundred matches in a row! Hahahaha~, it’ll be way more interesting that way. The first person to fifty-one will be the winner.”

Hearing the way that he was casually speaking with a ‘divine’ being, every single person in the room was wondering if he was some sort of deity, or just completely insane. None of them had any idea what the Arcane Armory was, and the entire conversation wasn’t something that normal NPCs were meant to comprehend.

After a few moments of deciding with a blank expression, Arcana finally placed the token in the air to her right and then created a deck of illusory cards. She giggled and then dealt the two of them seven cards each; seeing that, Michael muttered “You’ve gotta be fucking kidding me...”

The rest of the cards were scattered in a pile between them, and then transformed into the shape of floating minnows, which swam through the air in random directions. Then she said “Go Fish.” and the thirty-eight rank-G, level-one, magical-beasts started furiously trying to escape away from the two terrifying beings.

However, a spherical barrier was preventing them from moving outside of Michael’s arm’s reach. He frowned as he complained “Fine~, but unlike you, I actually have a digestive and urinary system...”

Arcane snickered and told him “Don’t worry, removing your waste and maintaining your satiation requires very little effort. We shall be able to play all fifty-one to one-hundred

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matches in a row, without any distractions.” Then she glanced around at the room filled with frightened and awed people, before saying “The rest of you may leave. Your presence is unnecessary.”

Without even taking anything with them, most of the patrons and staff either fled the building or ran upstairs. However, there were still five who remained, regardless of the Goddess’ command.

Michael glanced around and noticed that Talia and the Dark-Elven dealer had fainted. Strangely though, there were two Humans who were sitting at the Blackjack table to his left.

What surprised him, was that they didn’t have names above their heads. Both were women, but when he tried to determine their features anymore than that, his vision became blurry. Even the colors of their hair, skin, dresses, and eyes were constantly changing.

The avatar of Arcana glared at them and then released a small portion of her true aura, causing the two mysterious beings to vanish. Then she murmured “It seems that the others are going to start trying to recruit you now that you’ve reached level ten.”

He snickered and said “Yeah, I haven’t really decided on what to go with as my second Affinity yet. Well, since I’m planning on becoming a Tank, Light would probably be the best choice. The question is, how should I go about evolving that way?”

After the Goddess giggled faintly, she asked “Do you have any fives? Also, have you considered focusing on Arcane?”

Michael sighed and handed her two cards, then replied “Of course I have... but for a Tank, being able to receive all that extra healing is worth the potentially increased damage taken.”

Arcana quietly said “Indeed, it is unfortunate, but you are correct. I believe that you would likely enjoy becoming a Mage or Sorcerer who specializes in Arcane magic... However, that could possibly be my desire to monopolize you, warping my own logic. Do you have any queens?”

He told her “Go Fish~, and yeah, I can understand your feelings. I mean, if I grabbed some guy out of another world, intending to make him mine, only to have my children wanna share him with me... Hmmm, well, this conversation is going in a weird direction.

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Hahaha~, besides, is there some reason why you can't get more people? I like being the only Player, don't get me wrong, it's just that I'm curious as to why I would be the only one."

After she casually grabbed one of the very real, floating, silver minnows, it suddenly transformed into a playing card. The Goddess murmured "Every century, it is possible for each of us to create a single Player. However, it required the nine of us to summon you."

Michael snickered and said "Basically, I have a hundred-year head-start on those other bastards you're planning on bringing over to this world. Wait a fucking second; what about the 'millions' of Players that you supposedly made the first time? By the way, do you have any sevens?"

## Chapter 67: It's All Fun and Games, Until Someone Summons a Goddess

"Where do you believe mana originates from?" The smirking Goddess asked the sighing man, as they neared the end of their first game of 'Go Fish.'

Michael told her "Well~, if I had to guess... I'd obviously say, your true form. Hmmm, in fact, this entire universe could just be a neuron in your brain. Hell, it's also possible that this whole reality is merely a virtual one, and we're all just programs within a really complex computer. I wouldn't even be surprised if all of this was just a dream and when I finally sleep, 'poof,' I just wake up in my broken bed with a hard-on and completely forget that any of this shit ever happened. Hehehe~, I'm a writer, reader, and I've seen so many damn T.V. shows, movies, and porn, that I've practically reached enlightenment! Also, I might be completely insane or in a coma... but that look you're giving me, is making me think that 'none of the above' was the correct answer."

Arcane frowned, while saying "All magic requires mana to function. Originally, I was the only being in this world who possessed such abilities. However, as you can clearly imagine, I was lonely. The story that you heard is relatively similar to what actually happened, but the details are unimportant. This particular solar-system didn't come into existence until after the Humans we summoned created it in the image of their original home. Do you have any aces?"

He snickered and replied "Nope, Go Fuck-er Fish, heh. Anyway~, so basically, you guys had shit-tons of power, but ya blew it all helping those original ass-hats screw around and do ridiculous things: Like blowing up planets and creating new ones with super-overpowered magic."

The illusory woman giggled, then whispered "Indeed, between the ritual to attract the millions of souls to this world, and supplying them all with substantial amounts of mana... However, it was certainly worth the effort. Even after they have all departed, their offspring and inventions have continued to flourish throughout this solar-system. A few have ventured out and created others as well. There is always something interesting happening now, though it all became rather tedious eventually. Thus, aside from the automatic systems set in place to uphold our laws, we rarely interact with mortals any longer."

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Michael asked “Do you have any kings? Also, so basically, the nine of you have decided to change the rules a bit. Instead of having hordes of Players that you can’t even fool around with, you’d rather just grab a handful of them at any given time, which you could throw your love and affection towards?”

She handed him her last two cards and said “It appears that you’ve attained victory in our first match, congratulations. I find it intriguing how difficult such a simple game can become, when my Intelligence has been brought down to such an unreasonably low level.”

Hearing that, he started laughing hysterically, then told her “Well, sorry for being an idiot, hahaha~!” Thus, they continued on to their second round, and third, then fourth; each match required at least ten minutes, and up to thirty if they were spending too much time talking.

All throughout the town, rumors were rapidly spreading about the Goddess Arcana having descended. More importantly, many of the Elves who were stopping by Avarice or partaking in the other pleasures that the Temple of Asura had to offer, began evacuating as if a great disaster was about to occur.

When Gabriel heard the news, he tried to send his daughter several messages, and put off their departure by a few hours, but eventually had to order “You all know the law! If an avatar of any Goddess except Aeris appears, we must return home immediately!” As they began fleeing towards their village, seventy-five miles to the north, he muttered “I’m sorry Talia... if you’re alive, then we shall meet again one day.”

The only Elves that didn’t leave, were those of the Arcane Affinity, who patiently stood outside of the casino. Not just them, but even Humans, Orcs, Goblins, and Warbeasts who worshipped Arcana, were basking in that ‘divine’ aura.

Another name began spreading among the population: The man who was casually playing a card-game with the Goddess. Michael the Immortal, a rank-F, level-ten Human; that was all that anyone knew about him.

However, that piece of information was disseminated throughout the various Elven nations. Of course, no one truly understood why such an insignificant being, would be favored by Arcana.

Yet, he was immediately marked as an extremely dangerous enemy by nearly every organization that received his name. Perhaps there were many who would believe him to be some sort of apostle or envoy of the Goddess.

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Unfortunately, that just made the various religions view him as an incredible threat, which needed to be removed as soon as possible. In fact, it was at that time, when Sophia finally arrived in the Holy Capital.

At the very center of Luxia, was the Grand Citadel of Light: An immense building, constructed entirely of mithril, moonstone, and sunsteel. It was built with dozens enormous spires and a central tower, which was literally the size of a small mountain.

Located at the very southern end of the Human territories, and on the border with the Warbeast Hinterlands, it was one of the largest cities on the continent. On the very tip of the central tower, was a colossal orb of pure Light Element, which constantly illuminated everything for a hundred miles and pumped out lethal amounts of solar-radiation.

Anyone who wasn't of the Light Affinity, wouldn't even be able to approach the Holy Metropolis. Many devout Luxians believed that an avatar of the Goddess herself, lived within that strange and beautiful sphere.

Within that 'Sanctuary of Helel,' a small girl was silently floating around in a massive, square, white-room. On the ivory-skinned child's back were three sets of huge, dove-like wings, which were very slowly stretching and occasionally pulsating.

Her eyes were closed, and all over her unclothed body were various, intricate tattoos, which glowed with a brilliant radiance. Silver hair, which was longer than she was tall, gently spread in every direction and swayed like waves on the surface of a lake.

Below the 'divine' emissary, was a beautiful Angel named Sophia, kneeling on the ground and whispering "Grandmother, I believe that I have found him... The Goddesses have indeed created a new one. Thus far, he has only chosen to follow Arcana and is merely level-nine."

Helel smirked and murmured "Hmm~, the last batch of Otherworlders were broken far too easily. I have a good feeling about this one though... Mama wouldn't have sent me down here, if she didn't think he would make it very far. Hehe~, it's been so~ long since the last time I had a fun toy to play with."

Suddenly, the kneeling woman's body began glowing brightly and growing rapidly. Strangely, her beautiful, pure-white dress was transforming into a tattoo that ran across her torso.

When she stood upright, her height was over ten meters and another set of wings erupted from her lower-back. Sophia smiled warmly and asked “Would you like me to execute those foolish Archangels and Cherubim who plot against you?”

Her rank had suddenly jumped up to ‘SS’ and her level had risen well past one-hundred, and was considered a ‘World Boss’. She was the second strongest being within Luxia, and could easily exterminate all of the scheming traitors in the Holy City.

However, Helel giggled quietly, then told her “Don’t worry Sophy, you’ll be able to have your fun soon enough. As for those silly children, hehehe~, wouldn’t it be more interesting to watch the Otherworlder deal with them? Knowing Mama, she’s probably already planning to win him over, so it’s only a matter of time before they give-up on me and start trying to kill him instead. Hahaha~, I wonder how many times they’ll murder him before his soul breaks, or maybe he’ll actually managed to slaughter them instead?”

It was at that moment when the little girl felt a trace of Arcana’s true aura passing by. After a few seconds, she opened her blindingly-bright eyes and stared off into the distance, seeing through the walls of her room, across thousands of miles, and finally being stopped by that oppressive Chaotic barrier around the Temple of Asura.

She started laughing hysterically, and beamed a happy smile towards her ‘granddaughter,’ before whispering “Sophy... order a battalion of Lesser Angels to ‘purge’ a place for me. Make sure that they belong to one of those naughty brats, preferably one of the weakest Archangels.”

## Chapter 68: Doomsweek?

After hearing Arcana complain about his lack of Intelligence for the fifth time, Michael finally decided spend his unused stats. Unfortunately, she only told him “You should

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have increased your Wisdom, so that you would be able to utilize your 'Astral-Step' more effectively. Although, if you are still attempting to become a 'Tank,' then Vitality, Endurance or Strength would be far more beneficial choices."

[Player Information

Name: Michael

Titles: The Nudist, The Noob, The Immortal, The Lurker, The Survivor, The Astronaut, Shinigami

Level: 10

Experience: 1/100

Age: Adult

Race: Human

Rank: F

Class: None

Specialization: None

Profession: Leatherworker Level 3]

[Stats

Health: 55/55

Mana: 45/45

Stamina: 30/30

Mana Regen per minute: 60

Health Regen per hour: 50

Strength: 6

Vitality: 5

Endurance: 6

Dexterity: 3

Agility: 6(+2)

Intelligence: 7(+2)

Wisdom: 4(+2)

Perception: 4

Charisma: 2

Willpower: 21

Luck: 21

Aura: 7.8



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Attack Power: 30(+11.5)

Defense Rating: 3(+7)]

[Passives

Resist Paralysis Level 2: Resists Level two paralysis spells and abilities.

Poison Resistance Level 1: Resists level one poisons and toxins.

Immune System Boost Level 3: Resists Level three infectious diseases and illnesses.

Superior Regeneration Level 2: Organs and bones that have been lost, can be completely regenerated. Recovery speed is dependent on the amount of mana consumed.

Arcane Affinity Level 2: Increases mana and health regeneration dramatically, inside of dungeons.

Arcane Body Level 1: Completely breaks down waste in the large intestines and bladder, transforming it into mana, which is used to satiate hunger. The Aura stat determines the rate of decomposition.

Throwing Mastery Level 3: Increases Attack Rating while utilizing throwing weapons by 15%.]

Michael complained “I don’t feel any smarter, no matter how many damn Intelligence points I get... Also, why does Arcane Body make me feel like I’m having appendicitis and suffering from kidney-failure at the same time? Like, I can get the whole ‘no pain, no gain’ philosophy, but seriously, there should be a limit for fuck’s sake!”

Arcana giggled and whispered “Humanoids improve themselves in order to avoid suffering, beasts are more easily motivated by unending hunger. Most animals and plants tend to remain in their initial state; without ever attempting to become something greater, content with what they have already been given.”

He snickered, then glared at the illusory woman, while asking her “Are you sure that the nine of you aren’t just hardcore sadists, endlessly searching for the perfect M for you to abuse?”

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Hearing that, the Goddess smirked and replied “Perhaps you should choose Chaos as your next Affinity... I believe that she would enjoy ‘playing’ with you.”

After a long sigh, Michael said “I don’t know~, I usually like the ‘innocent’ type. Plus, I might already have a girl-frenemy, so I would feel kinda bad, even though she already cheated on me with my own corpse. Ugh, I guess Arcane Body doesn’t affect my sex-drive, because now I’m starting to get really horny.”

Arcana giggled as she aimed her right palm towards his groin, and then began dealing out their seven cards each. She smiled at him and whispered “I’ve temporarily disabled your arousal. Time to begin game-twenty nine; the score is currently fifteen to fourteen, with you in the lead. Since you won the last game, it is my turn to ask first; do you have any kings?”

He grumbled “Ugh~, no, I don’t, but I think my twenty-second death will probably be from excessive Go Fishing...” They had been playing for nearly eight hours, and it was at that time when the unconscious dealer and a Wood-Elf patron began waking up and immediately fled the gambling hall.

However, there was one person who was so afraid, she pretended to still be sleeping. The beautiful High-Elf Huntress was thankful that she didn’t have her bow on her back, because she definitely wouldn’t have been able to stand laying there.

Yet, when Michael complained “Damn it, what the hell is up with people passing out and pissing themselves every time you appear? No wonder you girls don’t wanna interact with these idiots.” she couldn’t help but grimace at her own shameful behavior.

The semi-transparent Goddess smirked and told him “The Willpower stat is merely an additional assistance that is placed upon an individual. Similar to Luck, before you came to this world, you had a base-value of zero. Your own personal mental conditions were then influenced by us in various ways, and in certain instances, we provide you with minor support. An adequate example, is the suppression of your various phobias... some were quite severe. I found your extreme resistances to pain and fear quite amusing, so I decided to help you cope with several other disorders instead.”

He sighed dramatically, then muttered “This is why no one wants to play with you...”

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It was early morning, and many devout Arcana worshipers were still kneeling and praying outside of 'Avarice.' However, there were less than a hundred of them in total, and the majority of people were simply avoiding the place.

Although the town appeared relatively normal on the surface, within the actual Temple of Asura, business wasn't proceeding as usual. Throughout the many rooms, there were no longer orgies, humanoids mating with magical-beasts, or rampant and unrestrained violence.

Not even corpses remained of the fanatic Chaos cultists, because the seal had finally been lifted. Within the basement of the keep was a massive circular room, which was entirely made out of golden-mithril.

On the floor was an enormous pentagram, and on each point of that gigantic star, was a person. Every one of them appeared to be Human on the surface, and had varying Affinities.

To the southeast was an elderly woman of the Fire Element, the southwest was an old man of Earth, in the west was a young boy of the Water Affinity, and the east was a little girl of Wind. Each of them were level-fifteen and rank-G, including the one who was at the top of that five-pointed star: Carlos the Necrophiliac.

They were sitting down cross-legged and meditating, and while they each exuded a radically different aura, all of it melded together into the center of the pentagram. Then each of them spoke at slightly different times "The," "contract," "has," "been," "fulfilled!"

Millions of chaotic voices resounded throughout the entire rain-forest at the same exact moment "We have returned! Hahahaha~! Ahhhh! No, I don't, what?! Where did we go?! Grah~! I-I want my mommy... I am my mommy! Oh, wait, why are you doing that? Yes, yes, ahn~, it feels so good, harder! Help, save me, please! Die, fucking bitch, die!"

The screams, howls, whispers, and cries were so loud that they echoed in every single part of 'Raphael's Jungle.' Looking down at the colossal expanse of various vibrant and colorful plant-life, with Mount Chaotica as the center, the shape of a pentagram could be clearly seen.

However, only someone who was viewing from at least forty miles above the surface would be able to witness something so large. There was a fairly obvious reason that it was called the Forbidden Forest, and was at the very center of the whole continent.

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A magnitude ten earthquake spread out from beneath the gigantic mountain, as it began collapsing in upon itself. Dragons, Treants and other titanic creatures that lived close to the epicenter, were being sucked into the swirling whirlpool of destruction. While incredibly powerful entities were being devoured in a massive scale, on each of the five points was a different 'Temple,' and each of them were starting to serve their purpose.

Carlos and the other four were staring at the center of the room, towards the mysterious archway that had suddenly emerged from the golden floor. Every few seconds it would change shape, from rectangular to circular, then square and sometimes oval, but the order was impossible to discern.

The old man, wearing the pitch-black robes, announced "The Chaos Gate has been summoned, and the sacrifices have been made... Now, it's finally time for us to release our seals. Damn, it's been so long, I can't even remember what the password was."

Then the little girl giggled, before screaming "Fucking asshole, cunt-bitch whore!?" It wasn't that she was reacting to his comment, but a curse had forced her to speak in only profanity.

After that, the old woman coughed violently, breathing out dark-purple flames and pitch-black smoke. The boy asked "Or cak sius ska oadad claosl sybleine saofai ckao?" and none of them had any idea what he was trying to say.

Finally, the elderly man, wearing a light-brown robe, told Carlos "There is no fucking password..." Then the portal opened up, and an immense aura of Chaos erupted out of the ominous gateway.

Their five bodies started rapidly mutating and evolving; their skin-color changed from tan or pale-white, into red, orange, purple, blue, and pitch-black at random. Horns, antlers and spines began erupting from their faces, backs, heads, and they were each growing much larger.

However, after raising their ranks up to 'D' and turning into full-fledged Demons, that was when the first being emerged from the portal. It was a naked woman with six arms and three-heads, whom had a height of over five-meters.

Her obsidian skin had beautiful and constantly moving runic tattoos covering it. Each of her six eyes were a different color, and her hair was the same. Every hand held a unique type of melee weapon: from a giant silver hammer in her upper left, to a

relatively small blue dagger in her lower right. Above that enormously powerful being's heads was "Asura of Rage, Level-75 Archdemon, Rank-B, World Boss."

She glanced around the room and then stared up at the golden ceiling with all three sets of eyes, sniffing the air, while a grin emerged on her faces. After a few moments she yelled "I smell Angels!"

## Chapter 69: A Chaotic Event

"Hahahaha~! Yes, I won! I actually fucking won!? Holy shit, it's finally over! The eternity of Go Fish has come to an end!" Michael was quite literally jumping with joy, though his legs had fallen asleep from sitting on an uncomfortable stool for far too long.

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Even with his superhuman Endurance and Vitality, he still had limits. Fortunately, he didn't need to worry about food, relieving himself in various ways, or sleeping, because his 'Arcane Body' had reached level-two: making it so that he literally never 'needed' to sleep any longer.

A total of fourteen hours had passed since they began their 'Go Fish' marathon, and Michael was only three wins ahead of Arcana. The smirking, illusory woman told him "Congratulations on your narrow victory... I quite enjoyed myself this time. Hopefully our next competition will last a bit longer though."

What had seemed like a hellish eternity to the Human, was but a mere moment to such an ancient being as herself. Yet, even she was finding the repetitive nature of that particular game, rather monotonous.

He snickered and held out his right hand, while grabbing the crystalline coin and saying "Yeah, how about no? Well, I did enjoy talking with you and receiving what is possibly the most overpowered grinding passive I've seen so far, but next time... let's just stick with one match per game. Wait, before you leave, can you send me to that weird Arcane Armory place?"

The moment that he asked that, Michael was suddenly in familiar white room. Directly in front of him was a two-meter tall humanoid golem, but instead of silver, it was translucent like glass or ice.

Then the Arcane Vendor spoke in an incredibly familiar, feminine voice: "Welcome to the Armory of Arcana. You will enter this sanctuary after conquering a Dungeon, Raid, or receive a token of Arcana. While you are here, even if you spend an eternity browsing my wares, in your world, it would be as if merely a moment had passed. Is there anything in particular that you desire?"

He snickered and asked "Yeah, actually, I was wondering about something that's been bothering me for a while now. Does Soulbound equipment adjust its size to fit the user?"

The androgynous mannequin immediately replied "Yes, most Soulbound items will conform to their owner's physical stature."

Michael pondered for a few moments, and then said "I want a big-ass sword, like, two-handed and unreasonably large. Do you have one?"

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Suddenly, the tiny glass token in his right palm began transforming into a huge, glowing, double-bladed greatsword. The weapon wasn't decorated in any way, and if it wasn't made out a beautiful crystalline material, it would have seemed rather plain.

The hilt was two-feet long, and the blade was two-meters, while it was relatively thick and a whole foot wide. Michael immediately yelled "Holy shitballs! This thing is fucking ridiculous! Hahahah~, I love it."

As he swung the unreasonably large sword around randomly, he noticed that it felt as if it was made from styrofoam. However, when he channelled mana into it, the weight increased from one pound, to nearly eight.

Then he used 'Scan' on it: "Arcane Siegeblade: Increases wielder's Strength, Endurance, and Vitality by two points; increases Intelligence and Wisdom by one point. Deals Arcane damage upon contact with the enemy and raises Attack Rating by fifty. Each point of Aura can increase or decrease the weight by one pound. Soulbound to Michael and cannot be used by anyone else. Rare Quality, requires level-ten to wield."

After reading that, he muttered "No way... Hmm, well, once I have a couple hundred Aura, I can probably use this thing to fly with. Although, by then, I'll most likely have a better weapon. Hell, at that point, I'll probably just be able to use a skill for that."

When he tried to make the weapon have negative weight, the tip began pointing towards the sky and he felt as if it were a giant helium balloon. However, once he released his grip, the giant 'toy' continued to float upwards for eight meters before stopping.

He wondered "Wait a second, doesn't that mean each point of Aura can make my mana reach a whole fucking meter? Won't I be able to do all kinds of crazy shit once I reach a certain point?"

Suddenly, the Vendor asked "Would you like to be returned to your original position, or to your Player-Home?"

Michael quickly answered "The Avarice Casino please~, and thanks for the cool gear!"

The moment that Arcana and the strange Human disappeared, Talia groaned as she struggled to stand up. She looked down at her damp leather pants and grimaced, while sending out a Wind-Whisper to her father.

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However, a second later, she was no longer alone in that room. While staring at the smirking man, who was easily holding an unreasonably large sword with his right hand, the High-Elf asked “What are you really?”

He snickered and said “Don’t you have the ‘Identification’ spell? Hmmm~, that’s weird, do you hear that?” while equipping the Arcane Orb in his left hand. Shriill screams, vicious howls, crying, and maniacal laughter resounded outside and were accompanied by a terrible aura.

Michael was able to keep the stats from having the throwing weapon equipped, even if he wasn’t actually holding it, so he unconsciously made it float around behind his head: next to the Arcane Die. Suddenly, the ground began trembling and the whole building started to collapse, and he couldn’t help but yell “Oh for fuck’s sake! What the hell is up with this event-spam bullshit!?”

The terrified High-Elf screamed “What’s happening?!” as he quickly grabbed his card off of the table, along with a handful of others. Then the two of them sprinted out of the gambling-hall, before the ceiling could fall on them.

He grumbled “Ugh, damn it, the fucking music store got wrecked! Hmmm, oh, I know that cat-girl!” All throughout the town, gigantic tentacles, worms, tendrils and huge insect mandibles were erupting from the ground.

Most of the normal adventurers and citizens had started radically transforming into monstrous creatures. Goblins would become Imps, Humans turned into Lesser Demons, Orcs and Ogres mutated until they were giants and ‘High’ was added to their race, while Warbeasts started looking like anthropomorphic animals.

Talia wasn’t affected because her secondary Affinity was Nature, so she didn’t have to worry about mutating randomly. Michael was fine since he was a Player, but nearly everyone else in the Temple of Asura had changed rather dramatically.

It wasn’t just the fact that they grew horns, wings, tails, scales and other random physical features, they had all received ‘enraged’ debuffs. If it wasn’t for the fact that a gigantic, ten-meter tall, naked woman was leading them, they would have all started killing each-other at random.



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The skies were brightly illuminated, but not from the sun. There were at least a few thousand Lesser Angels flying around and firing beams of light from their bows and blades.

They were viciously fighting against the Chaotic monsters and Demons, which retaliated with fire, ice, poison, wind and some even had Light magic. Aside from Nature, the hordes former Mages, Warriors, Priests and Assassins had a very wide variety of collective Affinities.

Just because they had turned into Demons, didn't change their original skill-sets, it just increased their original power substantially. Talia was completely dumbfounded and horrified at what she was witnessing, but Michael just figured that hideous Demons and beautiful Angels slaughtering each-other was a normal, everyday occurrence in a fantasy-world.

He ran towards the woman, who had the race of 'Demonic Calico Cat-Tribe' and yelled "Hey, over here you fucking pigeon-whore!" as he used 'Taunt' on the relatively tall man, wearing pure-white leather armor, who was about to kill the former auctioneer 'Yuki.'

The Lesser Angel was rank-F, level-fifteen, and had the Inquisitor Class, but he wasn't able to resist that extremely offensive remark... even if the actual spell didn't have too much of an effect on him. Michael turned to the horrified and confused High-Elf, then yelled "Oi, wake up! Blondie, go catch that stupid cat so we can get the hell outta here!"

In an instant, the furious man teleported in front of him, and shouted "Die, heretic!" while punching towards his face, and launching out a hidden stake from his wrist. However, with a two-handed swing, the nearly weightless Angel was smacked into the distance by the gigantic Arcane Siegeblade.

A ridiculous '-90' appeared above the Inquisitor's head and he instantly died, before his corpse even managed to smack into a collapsing building. Seeing that, Talia suddenly came back to her senses and said "O-okay!" as she obediently followed his orders.

Yuki's Health was only 5/30 and she was rapidly bleeding to death from the various puncture wounds on her abdomen. Thus, the High-Elf had to use 'Rapid Regeneration' to keep the cat-woman alive.

Michael tried to walk over to them, but dozens of thick, thorny vines erupted from beneath his feet and wrapped around his legs. Paralytic poison seeped into his veins and he was completely unable to move his body.

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Seeing that their brother in arms was brutally killed by him, three other angelic Inquisitors swooped down and attempted to take revenge. Fortunately, the Huntress noticed his situation, and cast a relatively weak 'Natural Remedy' spell on him, causing the Chaotic poison to be dispelled.

He yelled "Good job!" as he telekinetically threw his Arcane Orb at one of the rank-F Lesser Angels, dealing a surprising fifty points of damage. As soon as the other two teleported next to him, Michael smacked one of them away, and then was stabbed in the back by the other.

However, even when having his left kidney impaled by a metal stake, his health only dropped to 61/75. Of course, there was a 'bleeding' debuff, and it certainly felt horrible, but it wasn't a lethal wound.

Then he remembered something important, he wasn't using 'Stat-Boost.' When he lifted his empty left hand and activated the spell, his whole body was enveloped in a prismatic radiance.

Another stake stabbed into his back, and a '-10' appeared, but something strange occurred. Breaking past ten Strength and Agility so suddenly, Michael finally felt the huge difference from his base-stats.

With a hysterical laugh, he easily ripped the vines out of the ground and then used Arcane Force on his giant sword, while swiftly turning around and striking it against the beautiful woman's chest. The blade didn't cut her at all, and there was actually zero damage from the blow... until her nearly weightless body smashed into a gigantic centipede at a few hundred miles per hour and transformed into a huge cloud of golden blood and white feathers.

Michael yelled "Holy fucking shitballs... that was awesome! Well, it was also really gross, but this whole place is a hellhole already, so it's fine~!"

Then he heard a monotonous feminine voice announce "You have reached level eleven."

## Chapter 70: A Hardcore Class-Quest

### [Player Information

Name: Michael

Titles: The Nudist, The Noob, The Immortal, The Lurker, The Survivor, The Astronaut,  
Shinigami

Level: 11

Experience: 23/220

Age: Adult

Race: Human

Rank: F

Class: None

Specialization: None

Profession: Leatherworker Level 3]

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[Stats

Health: 80/80  
Mana: 50/50  
Stamina: 40/40  
Mana Regen per minute: 80  
Health Regen per hour: 80

Strength: 6(+2)  
Vitality: 6(+2)  
Endurance: 6(+2)  
Dexterity: 3  
Agility: 6(+2)  
Intelligence: 7(+3)  
Wisdom: 5(+3)  
Perception: 4  
Charisma: 2

Willpower: 21  
Luck: 21  
Aura: 7.8

Attack Power: 40(+50)  
Defense Rating: 4(+7)]

Michael immediately placed his newly acquired stat-points into Vitality and Wisdom. His choice was mainly influenced by his desire to even out his numbers, but an increase in Mana and Health regeneration was always a good thing.

Once his level rose, the 'Stat-Boost' buff had been removed, so he needed to quickly re-apply it. "Fucking hell, what's with that sudden experience jump? Hmmm, I need to get those two outta here first... Well, I guess I don't really 'have' to do anything for them, but Calico-Girl is so damn adorable, and Innocent Blondie is too cute to die."

His real reason for saving Yuki was actually because he figured that she probably had a decent amount of gold on her, and he wanted to buy things for his house. At least, until he finally reached the two of them and threw the unconscious and bloodied cat-woman over his left shoulder.

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A message suddenly appeared: “Class Quest: When faced with a disaster, most people would choose to save themselves, while disregarding everyone around them. What use is there in dying while attempting to help a complete stranger after all? Yet, there will always be those few, brave heroes who are willing to sacrifice their safety, happiness, and even their lives to protect anyone they deem worthy of salvation. Disregarding race, gender, culture, and religion, they would even help someone who hated them.

“The Temple of Asura is under attack by a battalion of Angels and all of the inhabitants have been transformed into raging Demons. You are surrounded by thousands of enemies, but there are still some people who haven’t changed and are desperately struggling to survive. Fill your ten extra-dimensional prison-slots with those you deem worthy of your salvation, and then release them in your Player-Home. Warning: If you die, so will everyone within your extra-dimensional prison. The ‘Return Home’ feature has been disabled, along with the spell ‘Astral Step.’ Reward: New Class, one-hundred experience points, a Soulbound item.”

Michael shouted “What the actual fuck?! Shit, the difficulty level is way too fucking hard on all these Quests!” as he immediately placed Yuki into his first spot. His normal carefree mentality had completely changed, and he told the frightened High-Elf “Talia, listen up, from now on, keep healing me and I’ll make sure that you stay alive. It’s time to get super-serious...”

She glanced around at the chaotic battlefield, filled with Demons and frenzied Angels, before nodding asking “Okay, but you know I’m a Huntress right?” Aside from ‘Rapid Regeneration’ and ‘Nature’s Remedy,’ she didn’t have any other spells that she could use to help him out; she didn’t even have her bow with her, so there wasn’t much else that she could do either.

Suddenly a huge explosion resounded and a shock-wave of aura erupted from the top of the giant castle. The ten-meter tall ‘Asura of Rage’ and a similarly colossal Arcangel named ‘Adonael’ were fiercely fighting to the death; he had a full suit of mirror-like armor, and wielded a huge tower-shield, along with a massive cutlass, while she was seemingly naked.

As the B-rank, level-75 World Bosses were dueling, their forces became even more bloodthirsty and vicious. Regardless of which side actually won, Michael didn’t want to be there for the victory celebration, so he quickly began heading towards the town’s only entrance and exit.

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After a few seconds, a five-meter tall, naked Orc man, with crimson skin, roared at them and threw a gigantic punch at the tiny Human. However, size wasn't everything, and without any kind of magical defenses, there was nothing that he could do against the Arcane Siegeblade.

Unfortunately, after that first incredibly powerful strike, Michael's giant sword suddenly stopped glowing on its own. He grumbled "Oh for fuck's sake! I even have to charge the damn thing?!" as he stabbed the tip into the second incoming fist.

Then he finally realized something fairly important: "Is this thing made outta rubber?!" Just like the Arcane Orb, his Siegeblade literally bounced the attack away, without being able to deal any physical damage.

Since the Orc only had a few Health-points left, Michael aimed the tip of his over-sized sword at the enemy and fired an Arcane Bolt. When his enemy died, he didn't even bother to collect the corpse and sprinted towards a fallen Lesser Angel.

She was wearing heavy plate-mail armor, which was incredibly reflective. In her right hand was a tower shield, while her right was holding a broken broadsword.

Both of the girl's dove-like wings were shredded and bleeding glowing golden liquid. Above her head was written "Hanael the Righteous, Level-12 Lesser Angel Paladin, rank-F."

The woman was defending against an obsidian-skinned woman, with four arms and two huge antlers coming out of her temples. In each hand was a large, pitch-black cutlass, and out of her back had grown two huge raven wings.

Behind the Paladin was a relatively small and weak Lesser Angel Priest, wearing a white-robe that was stained with his own golden blood. He was kneeling on the ground and struggling to maintain 'Healing Radiance' onto both of their severely wounded bodies.

When Michael arrived, he immediately charged ten points of mana into his sword and then easily bisected the unarmored and demonic woman. He quickly shoved both halves of the spasming corpse into his sixteenth bag-slot.

The Human glared at the two-meter tall, heavily armored Angel and asked "Do the two of you want to live?" At that moment a chorus of simultaneous screams and cries rang out, as a few hundred of the winged Archers fell from the sky at the same time.

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They had been hit by a stray 'Chaos Bolt' from Asura; while they weren't instantly killed, they had been driven insane as their wings burned off. Witnessing that horrific sight, the relatively young woman nodded her head and said "Of course we do, but if we flee, we'll be marked as heretics and hunted by the Holy Council..."

Michael smiled at her and touched her shield with his left hand, sending her into his second prison-slot. He gazed down at the violently coughing Priest named 'Leo' and quickly sent him into the third spot, while muttering "I wonder what the rules to this prison shit are? Well, whatever, I just need six more and I can get the hell outta here."

Actually, under normal circumstances, he would have to either have the person's consent or they would need to be unconscious, but Quests could temporarily change certain game mechanics. When he saw the Uncommon leather armor and the four cutlasses laying on the ground, he complained "Damn it, there's so much useful shit laying around, and I can't even carry any of it!"

There were plenty of other weakened Angels laying around, along with dying Demons, but he was looking for specific types of people. The best way to judge a person at a glance, was based on their main title and the situation that they were in.

Julia screamed "Ah~! Help!" as a heavily armored angelic Paladin swooped down and smacked the High-Elf with her shield. However, before the woman had the chance to impale the stunned Huntress, Michael used Arcane Pull on the long-eared blonde and sent her into prison-slot four.

He yelled "Hey fat-ass, catch!" as he threw the gigantic glowing Siegeblade into the Angel's chest-plate. It didn't have nearly enough momentum or power to actually penetrate her armor, but a '-90' still appeared above her head, as her lifeless corpse was knocked backwards a few meters.

She was a level-18, rank-E, so he quickly used his Arcane Orb to pull her corpse back over to him. Not only could he feed it to Goliath for extra experience-points, but the mana-core was also extremely valuable.

Unfortunately, only the body was sent into his inventory, and he had to leave her expensive-looking equipment behind. Then a golden arrow pierced through his left shoulder, followed by a loud shout "Anna, no! Die, monster!" as a dozen or so beams of ultraviolet radiation began targeting him.

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When he looked towards his attacker, there was a small Lesser Angel man, but before Michael could even counter-attack, a giant wyvern swooped down and swallowed the little 'dove' whole. Seeing that he yelled "Oh shit!" because the situation suddenly became much more dire.

Gigantic parrots, green dragons, massive glowing hawks and plenty of other high-level and rank aerial monsters started appearing. Seeing the enormous flying snake that was casually hovering behind the dwindling battalion of angelic crusaders, Michael started laughing hysterically. "Natural Serpentine Dragon of Wind, Level-92, Rank-A, Raid Boss."

Even though it wasn't a World Boss, and had no equipment, it was still a rank higher than the Archangel and Archdemon. Either way, it didn't change the fact that he needed to leave as quickly as possible.

A small level-one, rank-G Human boy with a horn sticking out of his forehead, named 'Tyler,' was running from three rank-F Fire-Imps, and unintentionally bumped into Michael. However, the moment of impact, the little child disappeared into his fifth prison-slot.

Those former-Goblins started jumping towards him, and stabbed at his chest. One of them even teleported behind him with 'Flame-Step' and embedded a dull knife into his upper-back.

Fortunately, the attack didn't actually deal any damage, but at the same time, when he swatted them like flies, he didn't receive any experience either. The exit was only a hundred meters away, but there was a massive amount of people crowded around there.

A shield-wall of Lesser Angel Paladins, backed up by Priests and Holy Archers, were preventing the horde of Demons and monsters from escaping. Michael complained "These bastards are even crazier than the fucking lunatics that they're trying to exterminate!"

Their moral was extremely low, because they knew that they had no chance of winning, yet they still followed orders. At least, most of them did, while there were actually quite a few fallen Angels stranded within the town, crying and begging for salvation from their Goddess.



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In all the pandemonium, it was obvious that there would be plenty of targets for him to choose from. A small anthropomorphic rat-woman named 'Zoey,' was level-two and rank-G, so when she tried to bite him to death, he just shoved her into slot-six.

Michael managed to avoid fighting against any powerful enemies, since most of them were focusing on killing each-other, but that also meant he couldn't gain much experience. Even after defeating over twenty monsters and people, he only managed to gather eighteen points.

He found an unconscious, but still living, three meter tall Ogre that he recognized: Gatekeeper Alisa. She had a few huge gaping wounds on her body and seemed to be bleeding to death rapidly, but she hadn't been mutated by the Chaotic aura, because she was of the Nature Affinity.

After shoving her into prison-slot seven, he heard a raspy voice yelling "Help, someone please, help us!" Trapped under the rubble of a collapsed wooden house, there was a small family of three Gnomes.

One was a bearded man with pale skin, whose left arm was completely crushed underneath a large beam. Aside from him, who was a rank-F, level-seven Druid, his wife and daughter were both of the same Class, but were only rank-G and under level-three.

However, they were all alive, and without even saying anything to the desperate and extremely small people, Michael just reached down and made them disappear into his last three prison-slots. Then he stood up and glanced over at the huge battle near the exit and wondered "Now how the fuck am I gonna get outta here?"

## Chapter 71: The Not-So-Great Escape

The palisade which normally surrounded the Temple of Asura, had been destroyed in many areas by raging gigantic Ogres, Orcs, and even massive Chaos Treants. In fact, Michael actually recognized a certain colossal panther, who was happily munching on a huge wyvern carcass.

Essentially, there was no 'safe' exit from the town. It was practically suicide to try using brute force against a couple hundred Tanky Paladins and Crusaders who were standing outside the entrance, so he needed to decide on his exit strategy.

At that moment he gazed up into the sky and squeezed the Arcane Orb tightly in his left hand, while muttering "This is such a terrible idea..." When he pitched the ball, it smacked against the left leg of a three-meter tall, beefy, rank-E, level-twenty Lesser Angel.

He was fighting to the death against a flying Ogress with four arms and gigantic bat wings coming out of her shoulder-blades. Unfortunately, Michael's plan failed, because when he activated Arcane Pull, the nearly weightless man was yanked out of the sky and impaled onto his giant Siegeblade.

The Paladin had so much Health, that even as he coughed up copious amounts of golden blood, and had a massive blade jutting out of his abdomen, he still didn't die. In order to fly, Angels and other similar creatures, needed to use magic to reduce their weight or have extremely high Agility, but low Strength, Endurance and Vitality.

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Michael used his left fist to punch the back of the man's huge neck, and easily crushed his spine, putting him out of his misery and into his thirteenth bag-slot. A giant two-handed, pure-white sword, and some broken armor had fallen to the ground, but he wasn't able to keep any of it.

However, he did notice something interesting; every time he stored a corpse that had gold, silver or copper coins on them, the money would be sent directly to his currency-tab. Combined with his winnings and stealings from Avarice, he had obtained a small fortune.

[Currency

Copper: 95

Silver: 71

Gold: 212]

Michael wasn't exactly in the mood to celebrate though, since he was still surrounded by psychopaths, monsters, and religious fanatics. He grumbled "Ugh, it's so fucking noisy, and smelly, and why the fucking fuck can't I fly?!" as he pitched the ball in his left hand randomly into the sky.

After a few seconds, it latched onto something and his whole body was lifted off of the ground and launched westward. He screamed "Holy shit! No-no-no, why!?" as he was soaring towards the tail of a massive Nature Dragon, which was coincidentally leaving the area.

It was a level-sixty, rank-C magical-beast, and noticing that something was gently tugging on its tail, it nonchalantly twitched and launched Michael like fishing-lure. As he was flipping around through the air, above the jungle canopy, his Arcane Orb had somehow managed to return to his left hand.

Even though he was shouting loudly, he was far too small and weak for any of the gigantic Bosses or Elites to care about. He quickly cast 'Stat-Boost' and raised his Strength, Endurance, Agility and Vitality up to twelve each, dropping his MP down to 31/60, but that was still enough to cast both Arcane Force and Pull at the same time, on himself.

Before he could smack into the relatively soft jungle soil, he first cut his weight in half, and then reduced it again by fifty-percent. However, the strangest thing about pushing

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and pulling his airborne body at the same time, was that his momentum was somehow completely destroyed.

Falling from a height of five meters with a weight of less than forty pounds, with thirteen points of Defense Rating, he didn't even receive any damage as his face smacked into the dirt. Of course, by casting both of those spells on himself at the same time, it was as if he was trying to tear his body apart.

Thus, both of his arms were dislocated and once he turned over onto his back, Michael groaned "Ow~, a-huh-huh-huh, shit~." Not just his shoulders, but also pectoral, trapezius, latissimus, abdominal, and just about all of the muscles on his torso were severely damaged.

Unable to use either hand, the two Arcane weapons began floating above him, as he struggled to move. He was only a few hundred meters away from the Temple of Asura, so he could still hear the roars, screaming, and other loud noises; yet, in the jungle, it was very difficult to actually see that far away.

Michael only had to lay there for a few minutes before his injuries had recovered enough for him to at least be able to stand and walk, very slowly. Constantly whining and groaning, he somehow managed to eventually travel two miles to the west.

However, even if his Health had managed to fully recover, he still had a slew of debuffs: 'disabled,' 'sore,' 'bruised,' and he was even 'bleeding' internally. If it wasn't for the fact that his death actually had consequences, the suffering immortal probably would have just drowned himself in the river.

After staring at the huge rock-wall for half an hour, Michael sent a 'Whisper' to one of his neighbors: "Hey Kyle... I know we just met the other day, so this might be a kinda extreme request, but can you come down to the bottom of the waterfall and carry me up?"

Both of his weapons suddenly became translucent and stopped glowing, as they were Unequipped. Suddenly, he saw a gigantic red-scaled and naked lizard-man standing at the top of the cliff, and heard a booming voice yell "Damn, what the hell happened to you?! Did ya get in a fight with a Ogress on her period?!"

Then the giant casually jumped into the deepest part of the river and quickly walked out of the water. Michael sighed dramatically and told him "Nah, I kinda did this to myself... Anyway, do you hear all those explosions and screams? Well, there's a pretty fierce

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shit-storm blowing around over there, so you guys should be prepared for the aftermath soon.”

The ground was constantly quaking and thunderclaps could be easily heard, but the sky was completely clear and the sun was shining brightly. Kyle said “Yeah, I can tell... From the top of the waterfall, it’s kinda hard to miss the huge swarm of dragons, ya know? It feels like the fucking world is ending, but it’s not the kinda thing you can run from. Well, if any of those bastards try to fuck with us, Julia and I will just tear em apart! Hahahaha~!”

While laughing heartily, the giant man grabbed Michael with his right hand and then started rapidly scaling the cliff. Compared to his six-meter tall body, the steep rock-face was still fairly high, but it only took him three minutes to reach the top.

When the two of them arrived in front of the two-story log-cabin, a gigantic, naked lizard woman was leaning against the roof and talking to a nervous cat-girl. Elina was standing on the front balcony, and when she saw the bloodied, bruised and extremely haggard Human, the Priestess immediately cast ‘Flash Heal.’

As the blinding light enveloped his body, Michael could feel that all of the internal injuries and muscle-damage was being rapidly recovered. The various debuffs vanished and while he was still completely filthy, he felt refreshed.

He smirked and told her “Thanks Meow-Meow... Ah, guess what? I brought you an awesome present!” as he pulled a level-eighteen, rank-E mana-core out of his inventory, and telekinetically launched it at her face.

However, before it was able to smack into her left eye, a barrier appeared and a monotonous feminine voice announced “Friendly Fire has been averted.” Elina quickly caught the falling, bright-white bead in her right hand and used ‘Scan’ on it, before gasping in shock.

She yelled “This is from an Angel! Wait, did you kill it, or just find it?!” as she gazed out at the swarms of flashing lights, and gigantic monsters. It had been several hours, yet there was still a massive battle raging not that far away.

Michael snickered and said “Yeah, did you wanna play with the corpse?” while he made the completely intact and pristine, angelic body appear in his arms. Leering at the naked, large-breasted woman, who had a surprisingly peaceful expression on her incredibly pale face, he noticed that she felt surprisingly light.

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Elina shouted “Stop it, I already know what you’re thinking about doing, and I won’t let you!” as she quickly ran inside the bedroom. However, he just made the corpse vanish back into his inventory, and started walking towards his front-door.

Then he turned around and said “Ah, thanks for giving me a lift, heh~.” to Kyle, who was standing next to his wife.

Julia told him “Don’t worry about it, we’re neighbors after all... Well, we did eat our last neighbors, but those guys were assholes.”

## Chapter 72: Releasing the Prisoners

As soon as Michael walked into his huge and empty living-room, he was shouted at: “Don’t you dare molest or violate that holy vessel!”

However, he just started laughing hysterically and told her “Calm down~, I wasn’t planning on fucking the corpse... Even if she is really hot, it just doesn’t feel right for some reason? I mean, logically speaking, it’s not like she’s using the body anymore, so it wouldn’t be much different from a pocket-pussy...”

Elina screamed “No, stop talking about it! Give her to me so that I can give her a burial of divine light!”

Michael sighed dramatically and then complained “I’m not gonna fuck the corpse, so stop freaking out. Anyway, I saved a bunch of people from that hellhole, and I’m gonna take em out now, so get ready to do some emergency healing.”

She took a deep breath and calmed herself down, before saying “Fine, we can talk about this later... Ah! Why would you kill Angels and save a Demon!?” as she saw the first person that he removed from his prison.

The Chaotic Calico-Tribe, former auctioneer, was severely injured and covered in wounds all over her furry body. Michael searched her torn-up black gown, finding a casino-card hidden inside of her lacy pink panties.

He complained “Eww~, who the hell keeps money in their underwear?” Then he glared at the Priestess and asked “What the fuck are you waiting for?”

Elina grimaced and then cast ‘Healing Light’ on the unconscious cat-woman. As he stored the card, he started snickering, while looking at his new balance.

[Currency

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Copper: 65  
Silver: 11  
Gold: 512]

Michael knew that someone in her line of work had probably saved up a decent amount of money over the years. Yuki groaned and slowly opened her bright-red, cat-like eyes, before making a loud “Meow!?” noise, and swiftly fleeing from the two strangers.

Her body was still humanoid, but her feet and legs had changed a bit, not to mention the fact that her face was no different than a normal calico-cat. Elina asked “Did you really just save her so that you could steal her money?”

Hearing that, the woman immediately checked her underwear and screamed “You thief! Ah! It’s you! Please don’t kill me, okay?! Just let me go, you can keep the money!” Perhaps a mysterious floating orb or die was a little strange, but the gigantic Arcane Siegeblade hovering above Michael’s head, was extremely intimidating.

He sighed, “Calm your tits... Maybe you don’t remember me saving you from that Demon infested hellhole? Well, actually, you were about to get killed by an Angel, but that’s beside the point. You can leave or do whatever the hell you want, I honestly don’t care. I mean, we’re in the middle of the jungle and I don’t really think that a level-five, rank-F Sorceress is gonna survive out there on her own, but go ahead.”

Yuki looked down at her legs and hands, then felt her face, before fainting. Michael snickered, then muttered “At least she didn’t piss herself. Speaking of which, this next one did.” as he brought out the stunned High-Elf.

Talia’s left arm was broken from that Paladin’s shield-bash, but with a flash of light, her wounds were easily healed by Elina. Once she regained her senses, the Huntress asked “Wh-where is this? Did you teleport us away from that horrible place?”

The immortal smiled at her and said “You’re safe now brat, but move your flat-ass outta the way, cause this next one’s a really big bitch.” as he ‘gently’ kicked her a few meters across the floor. Then he released a three-meter tall Ogress, who was bleeding profusely and her intestines were actually hanging out of her torn-open abdomen.

Elina quickly stored away her staff, and then clenched both hands together, while closing her eyes and praying “Goddess, please grant this pitiful woman your divine



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grace: Healing Light!” While the spell was being cast, Michael scowled as he struggled to shove the huge bowels back inside of her body.

When the radiance finally faded, Alisa opened her bright-green eyes and then quickly struggled to sit-up. Her crimson chest-plate and the rest of her armor was still intact, but just a bit scratched and dented; however, her giant greatsword was missing.

She looked around for a few seconds, before staring at the vaguely familiar Human and asking “Where is this place?” The last thing that she remembered was being disemboweled by a vicious angelic Warrior.

Michael told her “My house... now go wait in the corner; I’ve still got like seven more of you bastards to let out.” He didn’t try to kick her away, because she was simply too large and heavy: plus her injuries weren’t completely healed.

After that, he released the scared little boy with the unicorn-styled horn sticking out of his forehead. Tyler was actually completely unharmed, but his shorts and shirt were still covered in copious amounts of red, black and yellow liquids.

The child looked around cautiously, but when he saw the giant Ogress, he ran into her embrace while shouting “Mommy!” Apparently, he wasn’t a mutated Human, but simply a very young Ogre.

Both of them were crying and hugging each-other for a few seconds, before the scarred woman furrowed her brows and told Michael “Thank you, I don’t know how I could ever repay you for saving us.”

He immediately said “Well, you could probably start by cleaning up all the blood and guts off of my previously pristine hardwood floor... but wait until after I’m done. Elina, the next group is gonna be pretty fucked up, but they don’t have too much Health, so it shouldn’t be that difficult.”

A middle-aged man and woman, plus a teenage girl suddenly appeared in front of him. Each of them had various broken limbs and puncture wounds, and were extremely small.

The tiny Druids didn’t actually need the Priestess to help them though, because they each cast ‘Rapid Regeneration’ and ‘Blessings of Naturae’ on themselves. Once they were healed, the father quickly bowed and yelled “Thank you for saving us!”

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When the three Gnomes saw the relatively powerful Arcane ‘Mage,’ they assumed that he had teleported them to safety somehow. Thus, they didn’t require an explanation and walked over to Alisa, since they actually knew the two Ogres.

Next was the fairly weak rat-girl, who was still ‘enraged’ even after he removed her from his prison-slot. Michael held the leather-armored Thief with both hands and gently said “Relax, everything is fine now...” while channeling mana into his voice, and activating ‘Enthrall.’

Hearing that deep and calming voice, Zoey came back to her senses and used ‘Vapor-Step’ to suddenly disappear. He had no idea where she went and didn’t really care either, but then he turned to the frowning cat-girl while smirking and told her “Ah, you were complaining about me killing those Angels before, but guess what? Bam! Quest complete, bitches~!”

A pair of Paladin and Priest suddenly appeared between the two of them. Both had shredded wings and were covered in horrible wounds, though their Health was still relatively high.

Elina gasped and then immediately cast ‘Flash-Heal’ on each of them, while beaming a happy smile. The two Lesser Angels were both incredibly feminine, even though their height was two-meters, and the woman was fairly muscular.

They had silver hair and golden eyes, with porcelain skin; neither of them seemed particularly surprised by the sudden change of venue. Hanael and Leo both got down on one knee and looked up at Michael while simultaneously shouting “Thank you for your benevolence!”

He cringed at the sight and then looked around the room at everyone, before announcing “Okay~, so I may have mentioned this already, but this is the living-room of my house! Which means that each of you have helped make it smell like death, shit, piss and vomit, so good fucking job! That was sarcasm by the way, because I’m definitely not happy with how filthy everything is right now! Therefore, each of you should go wash off in the river outside and then come back to help clean up the mess you all made! Don’t piss off my neighbors, the giant lizard-people, and they probably won’t try to eat you. None of you owe me anything; I just helped you because you either asked for it, or it was convenient for me. I mean, you still have to clean my floor, but aside from that, I don’t really care what you do.”

## Chapter 73: Not Very Classy

“Quest Complete: You have chosen ten strangers, seemingly at random, and rescued them from certain death. Two men, one boy, and seven women are alive right now, because they were fortunate enough to come across your path. There are no truly selfless people; everyone has desires and goals that they pursue, but that doesn’t change the fact that you have chosen to help others, to achieve yours.

“Just like Arcana, you refuse to condemn others based on race, religion, gender, or culture. Thus, the First Goddess has decided to bestow upon you, the Guardian Class. Furthermore, you may choose between three pieces of equipment: Helmet, Chestplate, and Pauldrons.”

As Michael was casually bathing in the warm river-water, he finally received the notification that he had completed the Quest. He also realized that he could make the flying ball and giant sword that were floating above his body completely invisible.

After taking a few seconds to think about his decision, he swam up to the bank and as he exited the water, the space around his body suddenly started distorting. Once it was over, a glowing, thin, rubber-like armor had appeared on his chest and back.

Its appearance and the material that it was made out of was very similar to his weapons, so Michael wasn’t surprised when he read “Arcane Breastplate: Increases wearer’s Strength, Endurance, Vitality and Wisdom by two points; raises Defense Rating by ten. Each point of Aura reduces magic-damage taken by one. Soulbound to Michael and cannot be used by anyone else. Rare Quality, requires level-ten to equip.”

Then he received another notification: “You have gained Guardian’s Constitution Level 1: Increases the body’s natural Strength, Vitality and Endurance by one point. Aggro generation increases dramatically. Increasing healing taken from allies by 10%.”

He muttered “Hmmm~, my OP-ness is rising rapidly... I might need to masturbate soon.” Standing there, soaking wet and completely naked, Michael gazed around at the various new neighbors, who were building temporary shelters in his back-yard.

Aside from the rat-girl Thief, who disappeared somewhere, everyone else had stuck around. The three tiny Druid Gnomes, actually transformed into normal-sized, greenish-brown wolves; thus, they just dug a hole under the roots of a huge tree and claimed that as their territory.

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Elina offered to let the two Lesser Angels stay in her room, but they declined and instead, picked one of the hollowed out caverns to the west. Sarah was staying fifty meters below them, so the cat-girl made sure to warn them beforehand.

Talia on the other hand, hastily agreed to living with the Priestess; she wasn't an adventurer and certainly didn't want to stay outside in such a dangerous jungle. Yuki and Alisa were actually close friends, so the two of them decided to build a rather large hut between the caves and the log-cabin: Obviously Tyler was staying there as well.

Michael didn't technically complete the Quest, until after it became dark and everyone was settled into their new homes. As he looked around, he complained "I offered to teleport the bastards to an actual village or town somewhere, but they would rather stay here..."

Anyone who would stay in a place like the Temple of Asura willingly, was probably a wanted criminal in Carrabelle and the other borderlands. In Human territories, all other races were mostly treated like monsters, and the Angels would be treated as deserters if anyone found out that they were still alive.

The only person who had a home to return to, was Talia. However, she didn't actually know where her own village was located; she lost her magical-map and her bow during the chaotic escape, so she was just planning on waiting for her father to eventually find her... which could take a few years: though she didn't say that part out loud.

While Michael was looking up at the Moon and sighing dramatically at his complete lack of tiredness, a notification suddenly popped-up: "Inari has reached level eight." However, before he had the chance to open her status-screen, the fox had already invested her own stat-points.

[Companion Information]

Name: Inari  
Titles: The Feeder, Chaos Hunter  
Level: 8  
Experience: 3/80  
Age: Child  
Race: Quad-Tailed Nature-Fox  
Rank: E  
Class: None

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Specialization: None  
Profession: Unemployed]

[Stats

Health: 40/40  
Mana: 30/30  
Stamina: 20/20  
Mana Regen per minute: 30  
Health Regen per hour: 40  
Strength: 5  
Vitality: 4  
Endurance: 4  
Dexterity: 1.5  
Agility: 10  
Intelligence: 6  
Wisdom: 3  
Perception: 5  
Charisma: 2

Willpower: 3  
Luck: 3  
Aura: 7.3

Attack Rating: 15  
Defense Rating: 2]

[Passives

Natural Immunity Level 1: Able to resist level two diseases, poisons, and curses.

Nature Affinity Level 2: Increased health and mana regeneration within jungles, forests, and sunny, warm, or moist environments. Increases damage against enemies of the Chaotic Affinity by 20%.

Aura of Nature Level 1: Devouring the mana-cores of Chaos Affinity will increase the Aura stat by 1% of the original owner's level.]

[Spellbook

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Intimidation Level 2: Instill fear into the target by releasing killing intent and using threatening language, infused with mana. Effectiveness is dependent on the Level difference between the caster and the target. Potency is dependent on the Charisma stat.

Entangle Level 2: Creates or manipulates thorny vines, which wrap around the enemy's legs. Root duration is dependent on the Aura stat. Only works when in natural environments.

Devouring Vines Level 1: Creates and manipulates leech-like tendrils from the caster's body and uses them to absorb the Health of the target. Damage per second is based on the Aura stat. Costs five mana per second. Twice as effective against Chaotic enemies.]

He snickered and muttered "Holy shit, she's like a hundred miles away... Well, it looks like she's headed back here though." Inari had explored a decent amount of the jungle to the north and south of the waterfall, while hunting relatively weak enemies.

Michael Equipped the rest of his armor, then had a mildly disturbing idea: "Hmmm, if I had three more Angel corpses, I could probably turn them into pelts and then make some leather gear..." However, he immediately dismissed that thought, saying "Nah~, my skill level isn't very high, so I would probably fuck it up and waste them. Besides, if I feed the two of them to Goliath, that's like... a shit-ton of experience."

Then he grumbled "Ugh, no, shit, why the hell doesn't Willpower keep me from thinking about necrophilia? My penis is telling me to do terrible things... Well, it's not like she's using the body anymore, so it's not rape, but it still seems kinda wrong for some reason?"

After entering his front door, he walked into the bathroom and then a spasming clump of golden meat appeared in his right hand. Staring at the angelic reproductive organ, he gagged and hesitated for an instant before sending it back where it came from.

He stared at the slimy yellow blood that was burning his palm and started laughing hysterically, as he said "Nope! My boner just got insta-killed." It took a little more effort, but he was also able to shove the viscous liquid back into his thirteenth bag-slot.

The skin that had been burned by the acid was slowly healing, but the pain was still fairly excruciating. Michael sighed dramatically, before spending a level-eleven, rank-G mana-core and five-gold, on a Light Affinity toilet.

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It looked similar to a porcelain chair with a large hole in the center, but there was no water and from what he could tell, it wasn't hooked up to any plumbing. There wasn't even a handle to flush it with, so he wanted to 'test' it out.

However, instead of urinating, he simply released a few ounces of his fifty-thousand gallon water-supply. Michael yelled "Holy fucking shit! Is this a toilet or a goddamn microwave!?" as the liquid began boiling at the bottom of the bowl, while glowing brightly and eventually disintegrating.

None of the vapor could escape and seemed to have been transformed directly into mana, which he was actually able to see with his relatively high Perception. Unfortunately, just because he had an 'Arcane Body,' the skill wasn't quite at the level where he never had to defecate or urinate again.

In fact, it was excruciatingly unpleasant to let the waste fill his bowels and bladder, while waiting for it to slowly be destroyed. Thus, he was able to fully test the toilet's functions, and learned that the seat was extremely comfortable.

He muttered "Hehe~, now what else do I need the most? Well, I probably won't 'need' to sleep in the near future, but the kitty-cat could use a bed. A sink would be nice, but if I use a Light mana-core, will it just spray out loads of radiation? Hmmm, I should probably go farm some different Elements first, but before any of that... I need to evolve."

When Elina had attempted to swallow the Lesser Angel mana-core, similar to what happened with Michael, a message appeared: "Humanoid Player-Companions must be at least level-ten before evolving to rank-E."

Which meant that he didn't have the luxury of using her as a guinea-pig, so he wasn't sure what would happen. Yet, he had already made his decision the moment that he picked Arcane: Light was next on his list.

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## Credits

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