

## Chapter 84 Purpose

Kate ran through the streets with both her weapons in hand, spotting another group of undead that she jumped right into, blood flashing outwards before she spun, wildly cutting into the undead with one weapon held in each hand. She kicked off one of the undead that got too close and killed it with a wide swing as the turned, aiming for the next undead. She heard a gunshot, the undead's head whipping to the side. Kate glanced to the source and smiled to herself, knowing that her ally had found her again. With him having her back, she knew that she could take more risks again.

*Onward*, she thought, listening to the updates coming from her radio, letting her know where to go to fight more monsters. The voice of Veronica was comforting, a voice she'd known for many years.

She didn't know how long they fought in the old town district but by the time her mana was running low, they'd dispersed most of the undead that had arrived with the hordes. Some few stragglers were still around for sure but she could neither hear nor see them. Kate finally deactivated her magic, collapsing to one knee as she let go of her weapons, the axe and mace clattering to the concrete ground of the blood covered street.

The same street she'd seen from the west wing of city hall. The same street where thousands of undead had charged towards them. She could see the mounds of corpses in the distance, the dead giant lying still.

The white layer of snow had been trampled and replaced with blood and flesh.

She heard Logan step next to her, his gaze on the street ahead.

"Not a sight I'd ever wanted to see," he said.

Kate stood up. She felt heavy. Tired. She walked over to him, leaving her weapons on the ground. "No," she said. "Me neither."

They were quiet for a long moment, a cool breeze flowing through the long and open street.

"All of those people, turned into monsters and sent our way," Logan said. "I'm ready to be done with this."

Kate breathed in. "Yeah. Me too."

Logan turned away from the slaughter, his sword on his shoulder, his guns on his back. "Let's meet up with Valery, and see what their plans look like."

Kate took a last look at the corpses covering the street before she turned and joined him, her eyes focused onward.

***'ding' 'You have defeated [Undead Human]'***

***'ding' 'You have defeated [Undead Human]'***

...

***'ding' 'You have defeated [Undead Orc]'***

**'ding' 'Omen of Vengeance reaches lvl 41'**

**Stat points +2**

**Vigor +1**

...

**'ding' 'Omen of Vengeance reaches lvl 43'**

**Stat points +2**

**Vigor +1**

**'ding' 'Reaper Jump reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 8'**

**'ding' 'Reaper Jump reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 9'**

**'ding' 'Blood Rupture reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 14'**

**'ding' 'Blood Rupture reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 15'**

**'ding' 'Terrifying Presence reaches lvl 19'**

...

**'ding' 'Terrifying Presence reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 1'**

**Passive: Terrifying Presence – 2nd lvl 1**

**Your enemies will know your wrath. You have bathed in the blood of those who stood in your way. Beings will instinctively be wary of your presence, should you will it so. The effects of Terrifying Presence are highly increased if you are partially covered in blood.**

**2nd stage: You gain a low [Medium] grade resistance against debilitating fear and terror, both magical and non magical.**

**'ding' 'Terrifying Presence reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 2'**

**'ding' 'Roaring Pursuer reaches lvl 38'**

**Brutality +1**

**'ding' 'Roaring Pursuer reaches lvl 39'**

**Brutality +1**

**'ding' 'Thunderous Shout reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 10'**

...

**'ding' 'Thunderous Shout reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 12'**

**'ding' 'Reverberating Charge reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 15'**

...

**'ding' 'Reverberating Charge reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 18'**

*'ding' 'Aura of Silence reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 2'*  
*'ding' 'Aura of Silence reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 3'*  
*'ding' 'Sound Perception reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 19'*  
*'ding' 'Echo Awareness reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 8'*  
*'ding' 'Tremor Sense reaches 2<sup>nd</sup> lvl 7'*

*'ding' 'Unyielding Bruiser reaches lvl 23'*

*Versatility +1*

...

*'ding' 'Unyielding Bruiser reaches lvl 27'*

*Versatility +1*

*'ding' 'Weapon Recall reaches lvl 16'*

...

*'ding' 'Weapon Recall reaches lvl 18'*

*'ding' 'Versatile Throw reaches lvl 14'*

...

*'ding' 'Versatile Throw reaches lvl 18'*

*'ding' 'Crushing Storm reaches lvl 11'*

...

*'ding' 'Crushing Storm reaches lvl 17'*

*'ding' 'Weapon Anarchy reaches lvl 12'*

*'ding' 'Weapon Anarchy reaches lvl 13'*

*'ding' 'Heavy Warrior reaches lvl 13'*

*'ding' 'Flowing Weapons Resonance reaches lvl 14'*

...

*'ding' 'Flowing Weapons Resonance reaches lvl 16'*

Kate and Logan soon reached the villa, the streets feeling even more deserted than usual. Now that they'd faced and defeated one of the hordes, the city felt a little less claustrophobic, less dangerous, and still, Kate knew they'd required a lot of preparation, gear, ammo, and cooperation to accomplish this feat. But it was not the hordes that she thought about now. It was the source of the undead.

They had fought, had reached higher levels, gotten used to their magic, had found and employed weapons and gear from the city, and they'd made their own magically enchanted equipment.

They were ready.

And by the atmosphere of the gathered crowd, Kate knew that she wasn't the only one who thought that way.

Sweat, grime, and blood covered their crafted and often enchanted armor, their weapons showing signs of heavy use. A few healers were still taking care of minor injuries, and injuries that didn't look minor to Kate but those affected had resolute expressions on their faces. As long as they survived, healing would get them back in the fight.

She heard another group arrive and with that, Valery glanced up from the map before her, the group standing around her making some distance and going back to join the crowd of people.

Kate saw Veronica and her team come down from the first floor of the villa to join them as well, the two of them making eye contact for a moment before Veronica nodded her way. She still wore her black hair short, tattoos reaching up along her neck and out from the nondescript gray jacket that she wore.

A few crafters and cooks were present too, pausing their repairs and preparations as Valery cleared her throat.

"No casualties," she said. "The operation was a success."

There were nods and a few whispered celebratory comments. Most of them, it seemed, were too tired to show more of a reaction. They'd all experienced the fighting, saw the death, and blood, and they all knew that they weren't done.

"Our Lure team and the cameras we've set up in the city both suggest that there was at least one other horde that could've reacted to the ongoing fighting but instead the undead distanced themselves from our location. Some have entered the dungeon halls but most have instead gone either to the outskirts of the city or have left Falstadt outright," Valery explained. "To what end, we cannot be sure, because we don't know the nature of the undead, nor the level of intelligence both them or what controls them possess. One of our combatants who was surprised by an Emissary reports seeing an eye, black as an abyss. It is unclear if this relates only to the magical ability of the Emissary, which we know can evoke an almost paralyzing terror in humans at least, or if this suggests some greater entity that is at the very least watching, if not influencing or controlling the undead and their actions.

"We will keep monitoring the recent movements of the undead until tomorrow as you all rest and prepare but if the situation does not change, we will not delay any further and move on to our next and only defined target in the city of Falstadt and related to the undead. We have faced a horde, and won. Now, it is time to delve into their dungeon, to destroy whatever there is that creates, changes, summons, or controls the undead. And if there is nothing of the like, we will simply wipe out every undead that is left inside of that forsaken underground labyrinth.

"For now, we rest here. Eat, drink, sing, do whatever you wish. Everyone of you did more than what is expected, everyone of you rose above themselves."

"You have risked your lives today, to fight for the remnants of humanity. Tomorrow, I ask you to do it again."

Kate got some fresh air out in the villa garden, the plants and most certainly once meticulously taken care of lawn still covered in a thick layer of snow. She joined a group of people standing

around the fountain, finding the thing neither empty, nor snow covered, but instead full of water. She watched as a young man raised his hands towards the water, glowing runes forming on his palms, steam soon rising from the liquid.

“When this is over, we’ll have to build magical baths and saunas,” one of the combatants said.

“You’re jinxing it, talking like that will get us killed,” another said.

Kate smiled when a third one, a woman, stepped into the steaming water with her metal plated leather armor.

“The bath thing was kind of a joke, I heated this so you could clean up your armors, not use it as a bath.”

The woman just sighed with a smile. “Fine to do both at the same time, right? For those of us who can actually take the heat.”

Kate instantly saw a few guys step towards the water, stopping when they touched the surface.

“I don’t know if my Vitality is high enough for this,” one of them said.

She didn’t listen to their hesitant words and simply walked past, stepping into the fountain with smooth steps, her heavy scale armor heating up as she felt the steaming warmth of the wonderful bath. She sat back and relaxed, glancing at the other woman who did the same, the two of them exchanging a short very self satisfied set of glances before they returned to their own enjoyment.

It would’ve been nicer of course, to take a real bath but Kate supposed they could do that when they were done with the monsters in this city. For now, she’d take this moment to relax.

It didn’t take long for more people to join them, some of them helping each other clean up their armors and weapons with brushes and sponges. She assumed her own enchanted Overakar scale armor could be cleaned by dumping it in a powerful acid bath or something, so robust was the magically enhanced material.

It had taken a bit of a beating today but nothing too damaging.

She hoped the same was true for tomorrow.

*No need to worry about it now. This is the gear that I have, the gear that I’ll use.*

Her Vitality was now at fifty, her Strength at forty. She had various passive resistances against most of what she’d seen the undead throw out.

Kate expected there to be some nasty surprises down in those corridors but she found that she wasn’t just ready to face them. She was eager.

Sitting in the hot bath and soon grabbing some steel wool to clean her armor of muck and blood, she thought about the path that had led her here. The path that had led all of them here.

She thought about her first day in the forest, the confusion, the adrenaline, her injured leg, pierced by an arrow. Grey, who had told her about the game like system now governing things, who’d told her about webnovels and magic, the boy both embarrassed and strangely excited about everything that was going on. A sentiment she hadn’t quite understood back then but as time went on, she thought that she understood it more.

Maybe the prospect of catastrophe, the opportunity of magic, maybe all that had felt like a way out for him, a way forward, a way into something where he could grow, could be confident, and capable.

She knew that today he would have stood here, among the strongest of these combatants, with Ethan too.

But that was not what had happened.

*They died.*

And with them, she knew, they'd lost more than just Grey and Ethan.

When monsters had come to their valley, Kate had lost her friends, her work, her purpose. She'd been angry. She still was angry.

But seeing those two young men connect and find meaning in this chaos, one a shy and stuttering shut-in, training in the woods with his Japanese sword, the other an angry outcast with criminal tendencies and an affinity for pyromancy. It had made her feel hopeful, for what was to come, made her feel like they were fighting for something.

She wished they were here, wished that they hadn't died, and she felt a little bad about how rarely she thought of Bert. Maybe if they'd had more time, she would've gotten to know the old man better too.

But sitting here in this fountain, cleaning off the armor that Allison had crafted for her, seeing all these other people, all of them survivors, fighters, humans. It made her feel some of that hope again. This is what they were fighting for. To bring Celeste her orange juice, to allow Maximilian to broadcast music through the valley, to make sure Jon could study this new magic, and to make sure the survivors of humanity could build a new life, and find a way to navigate this changed state of their world.

She felt her blood pulse and reminded herself that they would have to wait until tomorrow to go down into the undead dungeon. To go down and wipe out the monsters that were responsible for killing her friends, for slaughtering the humans of Falstadt, and for forcing all of the people here, herself included, to face fear and death alike.

Kate sighed, focusing on the hot water, looking down at her helmet, the six horns jutting out atop it. She had become a monster, to fight back against the orcs, ogres, and undead. And she would do it again. As many times as she had to, if it meant that someone else could feel hope. If it meant that she herself, could feel it too.

***Kate Lindgren***

***Unspent stat points: 0***

***Class: Omen of Vengeance – lvl 43***

***- Active: Mindless Ferocity – 2nd lvl 20***

***- Active: Blood Frenzy – 2nd lvl 20***

***- Active: Vengeful Charge – 2nd lvl 20***

***- Active: Reaper Jump – 2nd lvl 9***

- **Active: Blood Rupture** – 2nd lvl 15
- **Passive: Blood for the Living** – 2nd lvl 20
- **Passive: Fury of the Unarmored** – 2nd lvl 20
- **Passive: Two Handed Weapon Fighting** – 2nd lvl 20
- **Passive: Unrelenting Carnage** – 2nd lvl 20
- **Passive: Terrifying Presence** – 2nd lvl 2

**Support class: Roaring Pursuer** – lvl 39

- **Active: Thunderous Shout** – 2nd lvl 12
- **Active: Reverberating Charge** – 2nd lvl 18
- **Active: Aura of Silence** – 2nd lvl 3
- **Passive: Sound Perception** – 2nd lvl 19
- **Passive: Echo Awareness** – 2nd lvl 8
- **Passive: Tremor Sense** – 2nd lvl 7

**Support class: Unyielding Bruiser** – lvl 27

- **Active: Weapon Recall** – lvl 18
- **Active: Versatile Throw** – lvl 18
- **Active: Crushing Storm** – lvl 17
- **Passive: Weapon Anarchy** – lvl 13
- **Passive: Heavy Warrior** – lvl 13
- **Passive: Flowing Weapons Resonance** – lvl 16

**Status:**

**Vitality: 50**

**Vigor: 28**

**Fortitude: 15**

**Endurance: 25**

**Perseverance: 15**

**Strength: 40**

**Brutality: 24**

**Dexterity: 8**

**Versatility: 12**

**Intelligence: 7**

**Wisdom: 12**

**Serenity: 15**

**Equipment:**

**Torso: Berserker Scale Armor [Rare]**

- Medium grade Acid Resistance
- Medium grade Fire Resistance
- Basic Enchantment

**Legs: Berserker Scale Armor [Rare]**

- Medium grade Acid Resistance
- Medium grade Fire Resistance
- Basic Enchantment

**Trinket: -**

***Food: Potato Soup [Duration 1 hours]***

*- Stamina regeneration +10*