

~ Day 109 ~

Drifting in an endless expanse of darkness, my thoughts were muddled. It was like a haze of memories which upon my body floated, however, I failed to recall anything - there was only the darkness.

I couldn't put my finger on what it was I should remember, but I instinctively knew that there certain things I should. so I struggled.

My thoughts and emotions ever so slowly become coherent once again, but the memories still didn't return. I felt like I had been robbed of something, turning my confusion into anger.

But no matter what I did, no matter how hard I struggled, that eternal darkness seemed to be stealing my memories, mocking me as I futilely fought against the haze trying to take over my mind.

The feeling of my distant memories became ever more distant as the ever-encroaching darkness enveloped me, almost to the point I no longer realized that I was missing them.

But in a bout of defiance, one sensation superimposed upon all the others. Through the haze, radiant and beautiful - a light could be seen.

I found myself walking towards that light as if it was an old friend guiding me. The closer I came, even though the darkness mixed with my stolen memories tried to stop me, I realized that the light was in fact a flickering flame.

Burning white, it dispelled the corrupting tendrils of shadows, hissing away in fright where ever the flame radiated its splendor.

Its warmth felt... familiar, like a friend.

I reached out, and darkness once again claimed my mind. However, this one was distinctly different from the corrupting shadow one - it was natural.

Warmth once again graced my body, but this time it was accompanied by the sensation of something delicious. It was a divine taste as each droplet caused surges of energy to radiate throughout my body.

However, as sensation once again returned, so did the pain.

I was at first annoyed at the fact that the pain had to butt in whilst I was enjoying this seemingly divine meal, but the pain helped my mind recover as I began recalling things. My life, the previous one and my current one. They flickered through my mind, reclaiming my sense of self.

Cracking open a weary eye, I was at first met with the blurry blobs of shapes and colors. But my vision quickly cleared, and I found myself staring up at a teary-eyed Mia.

I tried to speak, but my throat only allowed a croak as my body felt beyond beaten and battered.

The moment she realized I awake, she let out a whimpering sob, darting down to land a longing kiss on my lips. The taste of her ever so familiar lips was comforting, joined by the delicious taste still lingering in my mouth from just before.

I recognized the divine-tasting liquid as her blood, and she must've fed me to let me regain some smidgeon of power, helping my body in the effort to keep itself alive.

"Master!" She wailed.

I tried to hug her and comfort the clearly distraught drow, but my body failed to heed my commands. Barely even able to move my head properly, I cursed inwardly, but when I got a good look at my body, it became rather obvious.

I was utterly covered in gory wounds and blood. If I wouldn't have known better and came upon somebody that looked like I currently did, I would've undoubtedly have mistaken that person as nothing more than a mauled corpse.

My arm was still a mess below the forearm, but with my control over blood, it at least wasn't bleeding.

Although my body was slowly stitching itself back together, it was a feeble effort as my body was entirely depleted of energy and mana, with only the small amount of power given to me by Mia hurrying my body's efforts.

"Well, seems like we won?" I asked hesitantly, not really being able to remember anything after having activated **Stygian Transformation**.

I did vaguely remember killing and draining that lizardman guard after the initial activation of the skill. It did confuse me though, as it felt like the transformation shouldn't have lasted as long as it did. Maybe me drinking blood or killing strong enough opponents while transformed would extend the duration...

It was after all just when I had drained the lizardman that everything went blank, almost as if I lost myself to the darkness of the skill.

"Was the darkness that had tried to steal away my mind been a consequence of using **Stygian Transformation** like that?" I wondered to myself apprehensively, now not as sure as before that I wanted this skill to be my actual final trump card.

"Y-yes *sniff*, after y-you killed the lizardman and his guard, B-Bob and I took out the remaining mage and the mount..." She got out around snuffles.

"Come here you cry baby, I can't move so you'll have to come down here for a hug." I smiled mischievously, grunting as she almost threw herself at my battered body.

I was only with a one-armed embrace, I could comfort her, but nonetheless, comfort her I did.

Seeing the hulking figure Bob whose's armor hung off him in racks, I raised a curious brow. He wasn't sitting very far away, and he was looking at me with puppy-dog eyes. It was as if he wanted nothing more than check up on me too, but for some reason, he seemed restrained, almost ashamed to even meet my gaze.

I was about to ask him, but Mia picked up on it before I could.

"That dumb brute won't forgive himself even though he saved me countless times in that fight." She harrumphed.

Frowning, I looked to him.

"Bob? What is there to forgive, you did amazingly in your fight - you held off three D-monsters for that long?" I asked the Draugr, deeply confused.

He hesitated.

"I... I failed Masta... I failed Mia...." He finally got out, glancing at my mauled body. "If not for Bob being weak... Masta would never have gotten himself hurt like that..."

Realizing that he was blaming himself for that moment where I had to save Mia by sacrificing my vitality and mana, I shook my head with a sigh.

I paused for a moment, thinking over what to say right before steeling my resolve.

"Yes, it is your fault." I simply stated, making the large Draugr flinch.

Mia gasped, swatting me as she clearly disapproved of the harshness of what I had just said. But giving her a look, she realized what I was doing, and just calmed down with a reluctant pout.

If Bob was anyone normal, I would've probably comforted him, telling him that it wasn't his fault as there was nothing he could've done about it in such an unfair situation.

But Bob wasn't just anyone - and he wasn't any feeble and frail person either.

"So after failing Mia not just once, you're going to fail her twice - in a row?" I said, drawing a wide realizing stare from the sulking and distant brute. "Just because you messed up and are sad, does that mean you will give up Mia and me entirely in favor of wallowing? Or are you going to turn that guilt into something worthwhile and learn from your faults, like anyone genuinely 'strong' would?"

The effect of my words was immediate and had a much more pronounced reaction than I would've imagined, the hand around the haft of his weapon clenching so hard that it creaked as a knew light glean in his eyes.

"No." He simply said, a determination so great radiating from his aura that even I was surprised.

"I see, after all, that's what I expect from not only my right-hand man but also my friend." I chuckled, liking the new fever that I could see glinting in Bob's eyes.

[ALERT - One of your inner circle followers has taken one step towards creating a **Tenet** of the **Sanguine Lord!**]

The suddenness of the prompt took me off-guard, and although I neither knew what a '**Tenet**' meant in this context nor could the system explain, I supposed this was something very good.

Mia offered some more of her blood which I thankfully accepted, just enough to allow my body a full recovery with time. As I had many prompts awaiting my notice, I pulled them up.

[LVL: 50 Primal Saurian "Axetl" has been slain!]

[LVL: 42 Kroxigor "Qoxl" has been slain!]

[LVL: 46 Kroxigor "Ashix" has been slain!]

[You have gained 1.7mil points of EXP]

[**Siphon**]

[You have consumed the blood of two different creatures]

[808451 points of EXP and stats have been added]

[Congratulations! You have reached levels 23-27]

[You've been rewarded with 5 skill points for reaching levels 23-27]

[Skill - **Blood, Shadow, Magic** has reached LVL: 14]

[Skill - **Blood Shaping** has reached LVL: 11]

[Skill - **Mana Mending** has reached LVL: 9]

[Skill - **Ony Body** has reached levels 7-8]

[Skill - **Mana Control** has reached LVL: 10]

[Skill - **Stealth** has reached LVL: 5]

[Skill - **Infusing Slash** has reached levels 11-12]

[Skill - **Blood Born** has reached LVL: 9]

[Skill - **Lesser Eldritch Vitality** has reached LVL: 9]

[Skill - **Shadow Manifestation** has reached levels 7-8]

[Skill - **Stygian Transformation** has reached levels 3-4]

Status					
Information		Attributes		Traits, Titles, and Skills	
-Name-	"Xavier Tal'chor"	STR	32 ⇒ 35	Skills	25
-Race-	Strigoi (Blood Fiend)	VIT	142 ⇒ 152	Traits	9
-Sex-	Male	AGI	100 ⇒ 104	Titles	4
-Rank-	D	DEX	36 ⇒ 38	Skill Points	24 ⇒ 29
-Level-	27/50	INT	37 ⇒ 38	Resistances	
Health	674/1342	CHR	37	Physical Resistance	28 ⇒ 29
Stamina	82/355	WILL	55	Magical Resistance	29 ⇒ 30
Mana	42/368	MAG	120 ⇒ 124	Mental Resistance	32

I must say that I was rather satisfied with the rewards, seeing as the amount of EXP I had gotten from just three kills had been multiple times more than what I had gotten from close to a week's worth of slaughtering monsters down in this farming paradise.

Realizing something, I cast both Bob and Mia a curious glance before using **Appraisal**.

-Appraisal!-

Appraisal - Mia Tal'chor					
Information		Attributes		Traits, Titles, and Skills	
-Name-	"Mia Tal'chor"	STR	20	Skills	12
-Race-	Drow	VIT	35	Traits	7
-Sex-	Female	AGI	34	Titles	1
-Rank-	E+	DEX	24	Resistances	
-Level-	35/35	INT	34		
Health	222/222	CHR	52	Physical Resistance	10

Stamina	79/79	WILL	17	Magical Resistance	18
Mana	44/44	MAG	71	Mental Resistance	6
Appraisal - Bob					
Information		Attributes		Traits, Titles, and Skills	
-Name-	"Bob"	STR	61	Skills	10
-Race-	Draugr	VIT	73	Traits	5
-Sex-	Male	AGI	27	Titles	1
-Rank-	E+	DEX	32	Resistances	
-Level-	35/35	INT	13		
Health	322/322	CHR	7	Physical Resistance	16
Stamina	195/195	WILL	23	Magical Resistance	8
Mana	0/0	MAG	6	Mental Resistance	8
Sanguine Champion					

"I see you've both reached your thresholds," I said excitedly, drawing a beaming smile from Mia. "Why haven't you evolved yet? I've been out for some time haven't I?"

Mia shook her head exhaustedly.

"No, we had to run as soon as you passed out, so we didn't have time to evolve." She sighed. "Those... raptors, you called them? Well, the fight wasn't exactly silent, and by the time we Bob killed the last plant monster-thingy, we had drawn the horde to that cavern."

"Ah..." I realized.

"I had Bob carry you all the way to the other cavern we came from." She giggled mischievously.

"He carried you like a princess," She waggled a teasing finger at me, clearly enjoying the payback. "So who's laughing now?"

Pinching her butt and causing her to stifle her giggle as she let out a yelp, I snickered. I supposed I had earned it after calling her 'princess' so many times from her old moniker of the 'goblin princess' that she still hated to this very day, but that didn't mean I would surrender that easily.

"So, that's what happened huh, I knew the surroundings weren't quite as I remembered," I muttered absently, feigning ignorance at the pout she shot me. "Well, I've regained enough strength to punt off any critters if they decide to attack us, you both can go ahead and evolve."

The mentioning of them finally being able to evolve quickly lightened the mood of them both, and they quickly both got ready to start their next rebirth into something much stronger.

As always, I offered Bob the opportunity to choose his own evolution, and to my surprise, this time he actually accepted it. Usually, it would just befall to me, but the clear determination I had roused within had changed how he looked on things, and I very much like the change.

Before we knew it, Bob was consumed by the white hue of evolution and waited patiently for when he was done.

Emerging from his evolution, I hummed in appreciation.

Appraisal - Bob					
Information		Attributes		Traits, Titles, and Skills	
-Name-	"Bob"	STR	61 ⇒ 92	Skills	10 ⇒ 14
-Race-	Greater Draugr	VIT	73 ⇒ 112	Traits	5 ⇒ 7
-Sex-	Male	AGI	27 ⇒ 35	Titles	1
-Rank-	D-	DEX	32 ⇒ 39	Resistances	

-Level-	1/50	INT	13 ⇒ 15		
Health	768/768	CHR	7 ⇒ 10	Physical Resistance	16 ⇒ 20
Stamina	542/542	WILL	23 ⇒ 28	Magical Resistance	8 ⇒ 14
Mana	0/0	MAG	6 ⇒ 10	Mental Resistance	8 ⇒ 10
Sanguine Champion					

It was as I had been expecting, Bob continued down this road of the Draugr which fit him extremely well. From his previous hulking-up orc self, he was now more like an overgrown grey great orc. Leaner, and even a tad taller than his already towering self, Bob had turned into the image of danger.

Before, he just looked like a menacing brute, but now he seemed like the incarnation of deadliness. Even though his aura was restrained, he gave off an air of palpable danger and death.

I was about to speak out to him as he flexed his fingers curiously, clearly enamored by his strength and getting used to his new body, but the residing of Mia's white hue cut me off.

What emerged, wholly caught my attention.

Appraisal - Mia Tal'chor					
Information		Attributes		Traits, Titles, and Skills	
-Name-	"Mia Tal'chor"	STR	20 ⇒ 22	Skills	12 ⇒ 15
-Race-	Elder Drow	VIT	35 ⇒ 44	Traits	7 ⇒ 8
-Sex-	Female	AGI	34 ⇒ 40	Titles	1
-Rank-	D-	DEX	24 ⇒ 30	Resistances	
-Level-	1/50	INT	34 ⇒ 55		
Health	272/272	CHR	52 ⇒ 73	Physical Resistance	10 ⇒ 13
Stamina	98/98	WILL	17 ⇒ 22	Magical Resistance	18 ⇒ 24

Mana	212/212	MAG	71 ⇒ 102	Mental Resistance	6 ⇒ 8
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With Mia's new stats, mana pool, and her already amazing magic talent, she had become a monster in every sense of the word. But it was more her appearance that caught my intrigue. Instead of any drastic changes, her body still being its petite and fit self, she had gained what looked like markings on her face and her features had just become that much more enticing - enough to make my heart skip a beat.

It was not like tattoos, but rather like different shades demarcating patterns. The way that perfectly framed her face and portrayed her eyes gave her cuteness an exotic twist which simply added to her alien beauty.

Chuckling at Mia's self-confident smirk as I scanned her body hungrily, I shook my head and trained my gaze on them both.

I couldn't wait to see what new powers they both had gotten.