

## ~ Day 108 ~

Bloodied and battered, I confronted the two bulky Lizardmen eyeing me with such fury and hatred I even thought the nobleman might vein might pop at any second.

The fight had continued on, and by now, all my blood puppets had been put out of commission, so it was just me against the nobleman and his last remaining guard.

But that fact was that they had been wholly incapable of killing me, even with their combined efforts, I simply would not die. Much to the fury of the imperious noble.

I could understand the frustration of not being able to kill your opponent though, as I kinda stood in the same situation myself.

Although I was tanky, I simply didn't have enough offensive power to deal any fatal attacks in my current predicament. With his magic deflecting amulets, I couldn't widdle him down with targeted magic spells, completely severing the fighting style I had ever so slowly been building since becoming a mage tank.

During this fight, it became abundantly clear that I needed to revise both my fighting style and the direction my abilities were going. Putting that matter aside for now, I focused on the two imposing figures wanting to tear out my guts.

I had the mana to resummon one of the weaker blood puppets, but it simply wasn't worth it at this conjecture. I was running on fumes and had to close out this battle before I was run dry.

But as I was about to jump back into the fight, wanting to keep the pressure on the lizardman, the bellow of a familiar voice cut directly through my battle-hazed mind.

"NOO!"

Snapping my head in the direction of the voice like a whip, my blood ran cold at the scene unfolding at the other side of the battlefield.

Bob was locked down by the Lycan's mount in a furious struggle with his destroyed clasped in a one-handed grip, the other arm hanging limply to his side. He looked horrified and desperate, trying to shake off the mount as his gaze was fixed in the distance behind him.

Just farther away the Lycan nobleman had broken off from Bob's onslaught, now charging towards a dazed Mia who seemingly didn't react at all, even as the wolfman raised his sword to kill.

Mia was under some kind of effect most likely induced by the plants spuming spores into the air all around her, clearly the work of the plant mage.

This had left her completely undefended as Bob could no longer hold both the Lycan and his mount at bay. From his futile struggle, Bob could only watch as the Lycan lunged to seal the kill.

Time slowed to a crawl.

Emotion was a mere afterthought in that singular moment as my body on its own volition. As a bonfire of crimson haze erupted around me, I incinerated my vitality to create blood mana and fuel the rapidly forming of a spell formation fusion.

With an extended palm, a blood spike formed from inside of my arm, ripping skin as it forced itself out forcefully. The amount of blood mana infused into that single fusing of **Blood Shaping** and **Blood Magic** was beyond anything I had ever cast before, and by any means would've usually been so unstable I wouldn't even say that I had a reliable chance of firing it off properly without killing myself in the process.

But an eerie calm had engulfed my emotions, the state reaping me of hesitation and trepidation at seeing the woman I loved about to die. This calm shed all the unstable thoughts that would've otherwise tampered with my magic.

As such, the collective primordial blood mana flooded into and fueled the blood spike with such power, that when it ripped from my palm, my hand and most of my forearm exploded into a gory mess of flesh.

The crimson missile disappeared from sight as it sundered the surroundings wherever it ripped through the air. Before anyone had time to react, the Lycan who had been mid-lunge, suddenly had a perfectly shaped hole through his torso only mere moments before the aftermath of the blood spike's force exploded the rest of his upper body into a crater of unrecognizable flesh.

It hadn't even registered to him that he was no longer amongst the living as the eternal predatory smirk on his wolfish face seemed certain of victory, even as he fell limply to the ground.

[Greater Lycan has taken 674 damage, a critical hit!]

[LVL: 12 - Greater Lycan "Kain" has been slain!]

[You have been rewarded with 8289 points of EXP]

Time resumed to its original cadence, and I fell to my knee from the drain of using such an overcharged and forceful application of my magic. However, it was as if time was frozen as not a single person moved for a long few moments, the shock of what had just happened too much.

Mia had almost died right then and there, and I had wasted a great deal of my mana and vitality on that one single conjuration, now leaving me ever as weaker. To my dismay, this proved to be just what the lizardman had hoped for as he capitalized on the situation within mere moments of shrugging off the death of his fellow nobleman.

Appearing before me in a blur, his blade descended upon my now weakened, one-armed self. Barely reacting in time, I felt the lizardman's weapon bite down into my right shoulder, cleaving its way into my torso, to my chest.

[You have taken 288 damage!]

With the instinctual retreat of using **Blink** and **Shadow Magic**, I shot away, creating a significant distance between me and the noble. I barely had more than a hundred health left, and my regeneration had been mostly exhausted.

I could only wince as the pain of being almost being split in two was almost enough to even overcome the tolerance I had built up during my time in the hands of the Mistress. As my body tried to feebly stitch the base of my shoulder back together, I could only curse as I was running on fumes, my body only able to sow itself into place again, but without really healing the damage done.

"Kekekeke - this is ultimately the same fate all commoners share," The lizardman noble cackled, spitting out a mouthful of blood, not even hurrying as he approached with his guard in tow. "To be the stepping stones of something greater than their lowly selves, to watch us rise and ascend into greatness, as is rightfully our prerogative."

The amount of both arrogance and seething hatred tinging his hissing voice was palpable, unbearable in fact, and the way he carried himself now was displaying how confident he was in his victory as if he had never truly been pressured into desperation by a mere 'commoner' moments before.

I had truly given the three overwhelmingly powerful lizards a run for their money, even killing one, and leaving these two severely injured.

"Don't you ever get tired of hearing yourself speak?" I groaned. "I mean, you sound like a recorder on repeat."

"Recorder...? Nonsense, quit your quibble, it's time to end this pathetic display." The noble disdained after a bout of confusion at my words.

My mind had entered a state of calm finality. Out of options, I only had one last solution. It was due or die, and I intended to come out the one swinging.

"Just a bit closer..." I inwardly whispered, staring daggers at the approaching nobleman.

However, just as he was about to close the last distance, he all of a sudden stopped, a bout of hesitation and fear managing to flicker on his face before being quickly hidden behind a facade of disdain and haughtiness.

With the flicker of a hand motion, he signaled the Kroxigor to his side to do the work for some reason. This was quite shitty as I needed the noble just a *tad* bit closer.

As the guard clasped his large clawed and scaly finger around my throat, effortlessly lifting me into the air to meet eye-level, the Kroxigor snarled with a hiss.

"Goddammit..." I cursed, "But I suppose you'll do..."

Confusion was clearly portrayed on the Kroxigor's reptilian face, however, before he had time to react, the bloody haze of my vitality being burnt and the swirls of crimson liquid and shadowy darkness swirling in my eyes was the last thing he saw before departing the world of the living.

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Axetl hissed in displeasure. He wanted nothing more than to rip off this filthy commoner's head clean off, but he couldn't help but feel an uncanny premonition of dread when his mind broached that intention.

One to trust his instincts despite the parallel nature of his disregarding arrogance and pride, Axetl let his guard, Qoxl, do the honors. However, as he briefly pondered if he should mutilate the weird elf-ish mage's followers in front of his eyes to teach him his place, the previous premonition he had felt proved to be have been all too right.

As if the temperature in the surroundings had all of a sudden dropped, it felt like incarnations of pure dread and doom had descended upon him and were looming over him in an overcasting shadow.

In the clutches of Qoxl, the cockroach of a commoner began changing. His skin turned a shade paler, limbs elongating into spindly fingers tipped with claws that dripped viscous shadows, giant sickly bat wings, elongated ears like that of a drow, and predatory eyes that viewed the entire world as prey.

The transformation was sudden, unlike Axetl's own **Ancestral Form** which had already run out of power.

In a blur of motion, the one remaining arm of the now creature of horror disappeared from its place by its side, somehow finding itself piercing directly through the meaty throat of the Kroxigor.

The splatter of blood coated Axetl's face as he stood not far behind, the blood of his guard running into his mouth with a tangy metallic taste that somehow contrasted the superimposed sensations of the moment.

Getting his stumbling legs to move as everything was screaming death in his mind, Axetl tried to create as much distance between him and that horror as possible.

But before his very eyes, he could only watch as the figure of his guard turned gaunt, his blood being sapped of blood within moments as the monster drained his body.

Seconds ticked by, but it felt like each one lasted minutes, the monstrosity of horror training its attention onto him now.

Like some nightmare, the creature smirked with a row of mind-jarringly ragged teeth that would not only shred flesh but utterly mutilate it.

Falling to all fours, it became a horrifying scene as the creature ran across the ground towards him with the giant bat wings stirring up waves of shadows that Axetl could've sworn he saw faces twisted in agony inside - as if souls.

His retreat was for naught, the transformed creature possessing even greater speed than before. As it appeared before him, Axetl could only swing out with his weapon, putting all the force he could muster behind it even though he had already lost the strength given to him by **Ancestral Form**.

But his attack was swatted aside like it was nothing, and he could only stare in horror as the creature grabbed him by the shoulders, its claws digging deep into his flesh, eliciting a scream of pain as whatever tainted the claws also entered his body. Agony flared, and he stared in terror as tendrils of shadow coalesced all around the two. His veins were turning dark, tainted by shadows.

The last thing the arrogant nobleman of house Sinlore saw, was the avalanche of shadows that stormed towards him, causing such agony as it invaded that his mind gave out before his body did, unendingly entering and twisting his flesh beyond recognition.