I shake my robe, allowing the burnt remains of the boss to fall off my now very crimson and wet robe. I drag my hands through my hair, watching as a bit of bloody cartilage falls to the ground.

I was hoping to incinerate the body, though it seems I caused a bit of an explosion instead. At least they're both dead.

With a final flick of my robe, I then allow the messages to enter my vision.

Congratulations. You have defeated Khalaenas

For being the first [Hero] to defeat Khalaenas, bonus experience is obtained.

Level up x2 You are now a level 95 [Hero]

Level up x4 You are now a Level 88 [Bone Lord]

Level up x3 You are now a Level 95 [Enchanter]

Level up x2 You are now a Level 201 [Necromancer]

Threshold for class [Necromancer] passed...

Scanning all current skills…

Scanning all current attributes....

Searching for compatible class upgrade…

Multiple compatible class upgrades available.

Please choose one of the following classes at a class stone.

[Necrobard] - Consumes [Necromancer] and [Magic Bard]

[Bone Deathlord] - Consumes [Necromancer] and [Bonelord]

[Grand Bone Necromancer] - Consumes [Necromancer]

[Necrochanter] - Consumes [Necromancer] and [Enchanter]

[Necrotic Mindlord] - Consumes [Necromancer], [Bonelord], and [Mental Overmind] skill.

[Corpse Commander] - Consumes [Necromancer] and [Bonelord]

Are you fucking kidding me? Why do I need a dungeon stone to upgrade my class? It upgraded on its own before. This is bullshit. How is it different now than before?

“Stupid system…” I groan, taking a good look at everything around me. Blood, guts, and what might have been bone cover the island in its entirety. That doesn't interest me as I look for a class stone and find nothing.

Right. The last island did not have one, and if this island does not either, then it is probably in the middle of the fucking ocean.

“Stupid floor.”

I frown, taking a glance at the ocean water, annoyed that it is now very very red. It will clearly attract a whole horde of monsters.

“What happened?”

My thoughts are interrupted as I turn towards the speaker. Darrow is awake and unharmed. He looks around at the bloody ground. He checks his chest, finding a clump of meat.

He frowns. He grabs the meat and takes a bite. He raises his eyebrows and nods.

I groan and shake my head, unable to stop a smile from finding itself on my lips as Jessica, having seen the reaction, begins to puke.

“I can't believe we were so easily subdued,” Aldonis voices as he sits on a piece of bone. He stretches, finding his body aching a decent bit. His daughter, Thorous, does the same. Apparently both of them had been [Dominated] by a monster and had been forced under into its thrall for a moment. When he attempts to remember what happened, everything becomes very fuzzy.

Thorous nods as she takes a peek towards the sleeping forms of Quasi, Jessica, and Alba, all of whom had taken care of them until they awoke. Once Thorous and Aldonis were though, they collapsed, exhausted.

“Well, we’re alive thanks to the commander!” Darrow exclaims as he chomps on a piece of meat that is clearly raw. Rare, Darrow would say, as bits and pieces of it are burned.

Aldonis does not like the taste of it himself, but was forced to eat some since they need to save up what food they have left from the previous floor for Non-Gejan to eat. Gejan are omnivores that mostly eat meat, whether raw or cooked. Jessica and Quasi can only consume cooked meat, while Alba should only be able to eat plants.

Aldonis shakes his head, “We can't just rely on the commander to save us. We should have been able to somehow protect our minds.”

Aldonis turns to the larger Gejan. “Darrow, you were awake for a while. Did you ask the commander how to protect our minds, or at least the training to do so?”

Darrow stops as he is in midst of chewing a bone. ”Well, I didn't ask the commander, but Jessica said we need to learn to use Aura or get some kind of skill that strengthens our mind.”

Aldonis sigh, feeling annoyed at the explanation given. To him, Aura makes little to no sense. Heck, to most people it does. How is he supposed to cause the environment to change by focusing really hard? It just does not make sense to him.

“I’m back!” Orlan exclaims as he walks up and takes a seat near the others, seemingly relaxed.

Aldonis scratches freshly grown scales as he looks at Orlan with confusion.

“What were you doing?”

“Praying to the Goddess Eir. Jessica is teaching me… I find it relaxing.”

The others stare, surprised at the old Gejan. Jessica had explained about gods to the Gejan and her own god. But, so far, all of the Gejan have been wary or disbelieving. Well, mostly wary. Though it is rather surprising that Orlan of all people would even become a follower.

“Are you… like… a servant then?”

Orlan frowns before shaking his head.

“Yes and no. Jessica explained to me very thoroughly that the gods have limitations. They cannot force you to serve them, but they can accept you into their service as long as you live by their rules.”

Orlan smiles.

“Eir wishes to help and heal those in need. I… I find that compelling.”

Aldonis shares a look with the others, but has little to say. Instead, he only nods.

“If that is what you wish.”

“It is. I plan to ask the commander if he would allow me to obtain the [Disciple] class.”

“Are you sure?” Thorous quickly voices, “Getting another class will make your current one level much slower.”

Orlan opens his mouth to explain, but is cut back as Darrow snorts and speaks.

“He’s asking the commander. If the commander says yes, then it's fine.”

Thorous stops, and then rolls her eyes at the goofs complete and total zealotry towards the commander. Many have argued with Darrow, saying that the commander is not perfect, even his mother. He has agreed to disagree.

She sighs and then takes another look around the island. She finds Joker hidden in the darkness and is unmoving like a statue. Mule Is floating up in the sky with his discs constantly circling his position, ready to attack any enemy that would get near them.

Overall, she feels weak. Weaker still compared to the two non-living members of her party. Heck, if they all attacked mule, they may very well all fail and die. The commander is truly very gifted and experienced…

Thorous looks down quickly as her scales turn a lighter shade, not realising that it is night and that others could never tell.

The Gejan all go silent as they begin to think about one thing or another. The only sound is of crunching bone as Darrow continues munching.

Artyom finds the process to enter Jotunheim rather interesting. He was directed to remove his clothes and then had his body checked every inch for any marks. It’s a process that took several minutes as a [Frost Witch] cast spells to make sure that no magic was hiding the mark. Eventually, he was let in alongside a blushing Alissa.

As for Zeek, he was allowed to enter without a check. None had dared to stop him once they figured out his name.

Artyom looks at the interior of the city and still finds the whole place utterly impressive. Every building is made of a thick cloudy ice that looks as though they were carved from an iceberg while keeping prying eyes from seeing through. The residents are all huge and muscular. Mostly the males, but females as well. The entrances, chairs, furniture, and everything else looks to be made oversized for the residents.

“Impressive, right?” Shiro says as his hand falls on Artyom's shoulder.

Artyom reacts quickly. He ducks, grabs the arm, and pulls Shiro over himself, slamming him into the ground. The ice cracks and the loud noise quickly gets the attention of everyone in the vicinity.

Artyom's eyes widen as he realizes that he had reacted on instinct. He looks up to the crowd, finding them already turning away and losing interest like it's the most normal thing ever.

“I’m sorry,” Artyom says as he notices Shiro’s surprised look.

Shiro begins to chuckle as he stands up and the cracks on the ground begin to mend themselves.

“Damn, that was a good throw,” Shiro says, relatively unharmed from the impact.

Artyom looks around, confused by the reactions of the bystanders.

Shiro notices this and can only chuckle harder, “In Jotunheim, fights happen all the time. What you did to me is nothing compared to what happens in the city. Especially the bars. Hmmm, maybe I should treat you for making you react that way.”

Artyom looks around, confused and wary.

He looks to Alissa who only shrugs. She saw the whole thing and was not sure what to do.

Shiro smiles as he looks at the sun. “Alright. I’m going to the mercenary guild to turn in my contract and the monster parts. Are you sure you don't want to collect the bounty?”

Artyom, slowly relaxing, nods. “Yes. I only finished it off. You deserve the kill.”

Shiro sighs, “Fine, but I was serious about the tavern. Meet me at the *Witch’s Rest Inn* near the docks tonight.”

Artyom opens his mouth to refuse, but Alissa grabs his hand and smiles, “Of course! We’ll be there.”

Artyom looks at Alissa, who avoids his gaze as her skin turns red.

He nods to Shiro.

“Perfect! I’ll see you there. It shall be a night to remember!” he says while turning and heading back to the caravan and his team to direct them towards the guild.

“Well, let’s go get ourselves situated at the champion’s castle.” Zeek says as he begins walking to the center of the mountain.

Artyom follows with Alissa following behind. Her hands are still holding on to Artyom's arm.

Like most cities in Orbis, the buildings get more impressive and creative looking as they get closer to the center; however, it differs greatly from other cities as the homes become decorated with the skeletons of dangerous beasts. Wyverns, trolls, wolves, and other monster skulls dot the buildings as decorations. All of them were obtained by the individuals living within the homes.

Artyom stops as he notices a massive skull the size of a car perched atop a three story building with a shop at the bottom that reads *Elators Emporium*. At the counter is a woman who is bartering with another woman.

Artyom continues looking around, finding many shops selling different things, but all of them have women at the counter. He then begins to look at people they are passing by and he quickly notices a discrepancy.

“Zeek. Why are there so many more women than men?”

Zeek stops and then looks back.

“Jotunheim women value strength and capability above all else. If you want to get a wife or wives, then you need to hunt dangerous beasts and mount the largest skull on your home. Many men tend to fight something far above their level and get killed in the process.”

Artyom swallows as he digests the old man's words. Considering the size of the skulls, Artyom can't help but find Jotunheim a lot more impressive and scary than any other place he’s seen.

Zeek points towards an X near the skull. The one he points has three clearly affixed to it.

“Those marks dictate how many wives the man who owns the building has. It is a mark of pride as well as a way to attract more women. Considering the skull is of a young Kraken, the man can probably attract one or two more.”

Artyom shakes his head at the absurdity. He had a wife and he very well knows how hard it is to keep one happy. But three? That is asking for trouble.

Artyom turns his head and looks at Alissa still attached to his arm. Her gaze is avoiding his even though her skin is clearly quite red.

“We can sightsee later, Zeek. Where will we be staying?”

“This way,” Zeek says, leading them through the streets and to the mountain entrance.

A [Defender] steps in front of the group.

“What business do you have here at the castle?”

Zeek stops and turns to Alissa.

“Show them the invite.”

Alissa nods. She lets go of Artyom and opens her bag at the side of her hip. She grabs the scroll and then hands it to the [Defender]. The man reads it. His eyes stop on Zeek. Recognition passes his eyes before turning to Artyom.

“I see,” he says, handing the scroll back to Alissa and stepping to the side and then raises a fist. He bangs the gate.

“We have a contender! Open up!”

The gates quickly open.

“Contender Artyom, please enter with your wife.”

“Wife,” Artyom starts but begins walking forward as Alissa grabs his arm and pulls Artyom inside.

Zeek just gives the [Defender] a smile before following behind.

As they enter, a muscular woman shows up. Her gaze lazily looks at the group, unimpressed until she sees Artyom carrying a huge pack on his back. She licks her lips.

“A pleasure contender. I am Hilda, and I have come to take you to your lodging. Please follow me.”

The group follows, passing through a few twists and tunnels before finding themselves in the inside of a massive dome. At the top, the ice is clear, allowing sunlight to illuminate the interior. Within the dome are many buildings as well as several small arenas where many other contenders currently battle and train.

The group follows Hilda into one of the larger buildings. They immediately see a large eatery with some guests eating.

“This way,” Hilda says, walking up the stairs near the entrance. Eventually they reach the third floor and are given a room with a key.

“This is where you will live for the remainder of the tournament. Please enjoy yourself.”

The woman gives Artyom a look before heading back down. Allissa sticks her tongue out at the woman as she leaves before taking the key from Artyom's hands and opening the door.

They enter.

“Oh my Eir. This is amazing,” Allisa yells as she runs inside the suit-like home with three rooms inside.

Artyom strolls in, his hand finally touching the icy structure of the building, surprised to find it not at all cold.

He then takes a look at the room. Chairs, tables, a kitchen. He then looks inside the rooms and finds two of them empty, with the third larger than the others and containing a bed easily large enough for at least five people.