

Chapter -58

A loud hiss escaped from the hole in-between my clavicle bones as Panda and Bee worked together to pull the Plugin out of my body.

PLUGIN REMOVED.
Terminating ‘unCollide’ protocol.
Uninstalling...

Something like a CPU fan started spinning loudly from inside the metal cylinder and it got significantly hotter for a few seconds, while the sounds of whirring CD-ROMs joined the cacophony.

PLUGIN UNINSTALLED.
‘unCollide’ protocol no longer in effect!

“It’s so dramatic,” I muttered.

The siren sounds were significantly closer, now less than two floors below and rising quickly.

“So, what’s your plan?” Panda asked.

I started cackling maniacally, before saying, simply, “I’m going to punch it until it dies.”

“Really? That’s the best you can do?”

“Until I get an orbital laser, yes.”

“I’m going to help,” Bee said eagerly, but she was slurring her speech and swaying on her feet. Not to mention, the bottom of my Carapace Suit still smelled like her vomit.

“You go sit over there,” Panda told her, in a ‘let the grown-ups handle this’ voice.

“...Okay,” she replied, not needing much convincing. Once she’d sat down, she pulled out the Prayer Book again and started muttering along with the text.

“Running low on Mana is already kind of exhausting, from what I can tell,” Panda said, “But using beyond your capacity, i.e. dipping into minus values, *that* leads to whatever the hell is happening to her right now.”

“She looks drunk.”

He sighed. “So, your plan, please tell me it’s more than just ‘punch it very hard’.”

“That’s all I’ve got.”

“I don’t think it’s a simple thing to kill.”

“I already cut it in half.”

“For all we know that did zero damage. My suggestion is to try and destroy its head and upper torso. If you aim properly, your recursive punch might accomplish it.”

I nodded. “Seems simple enough.”

“BUT!” he then added hastily, “If it looks like you won’t be able to kill it, you’ve got to use the Interrupt spell on yourself!”

“It’ll work,” I told him.

I hopped on the longboard and kicked off, leaving Bee by herself with the book in her hands. I doubted she even noticed I was gone.

As I glided across the concrete floor towards the ramp leading down to the maelstrom of loud-ass sirens, a pop-up appeared in my vision.

Benefactor Quest
<i>This is a Quest given to you by your Benefactor.</i>
<i>Failure to complete the Quest will result in a penalty of the Benefactor’s choosing.</i>
<i>This is your Quest:</i>
Be a Good Boy and let that nasty Siren see you in your <i>full</i> glory, before you slay it with your fists.
Miranda
Reward: 100x ‘GAME Coins’

I let out a sigh, then said, “*Unequip All...*”

SKILL TRIGGER!

BIRTHDAY_SUIT is now in full effect!

I_CAN_FLY is now available!

My purple loincloth was fully revealed and somehow seemed to heat up more than its already higher temperature. As I rolled forward, the limp tail flailed around behind me.

GOOD BOY.

“Ugh,” I said with a shudder.

“You whore,” Panda scolded me.

“Dude, it’s 100 Coins! And weren’t you the one who told us not to mess with the Benefactors?”

“I never said that. I said not to mess with Absolutes. You’re just following the orders of a lowly Demon. The one that Bee has is genuinely terrifying.”

“Why?” I asked, as I felt my increased speed flow through me and down into my board.

“The strongest Demons can maybe expect to rule a planet like Earth one day, but that makes them little different than humans, except more depraved, actually no, scratch that. Anyway, Absolutes are like cosmic phenomena.”

“Like Black Holes?” I asked, jokingly.

“Yes! Exactly like that! One of them is literally the Concept of Black Holes incarnate. He eats star systems!”

“...Why would something like that be interested in the Great Game? Wouldn’t it be insignificant to them?”

“Yes, of course it is. So, the fact that some of them *are* getting involved should scare you! I’ve got no clue about this All-Mother thing that likes to give Bee food, but, knowing their kind, it’s probably something like the Concept of Sustenance incarnate and it has the power to instantly starved this world to death if it wanted. They’re fucking terrifying!”

“Let’s say I believe you—”

“It’s the truth!”

“...How exactly do you know all this?”

Panda made a sound, a bit like ‘Eeep!’, before pointing down to the bottom of the ramp. “Look!”

I allowed myself to be steered away from the topic and followed his pointing arm to see that the Siren was rapidly ascending. With a kickflip, I added more speed to my board, before taking the ramp down towards the severed monstrosity that was crawling up to meet me, bringing its awful head-splitting noise with it.

In the last moment before we collided, I leapt from the board and raised my fist in the air above me.

“*Wheeeew!!*” squealed Brock, while Panda was holding on to my shoulder for dear life and my longboard was crushed under one of the Siren’s enormous hands.

“*Punch.harder()*!” I roared, before swinging my purple balloon gauntlet down onto the very top of the strange neck-head-thing of the boss.

ACTIVATING SCRIPT: *Punch.harder()*!

```
if(Punch != Kill){  
  Punch.harder();  
}
```

“*Fak yuu!!*” roared Brock and the sound of a double thunderclap echoed down the ramp.

REACTIVATING SCRIPT: *Punch.harder()*!

```
if(Punch != Kill){  
  Punch.harder();  
}
```

“*Fak yuu, again!!*”

Another repeat, faster than the second.

“*Fa—!!*”

A repeat 0.093 seconds later.

“*—k!!*”

Repeat.

“*Yu—!!*”

Repeat, this time with enough force to break all the fingers in my hand.

“*—u!!*”

Then the next eight punches came in such quick succession that Brock couldn't even fit a single syllable between them. With every rapid repeat, I barely had time to register that my arm was unravelling, first the skin shedding from my knuckles, followed by the tissue and muscle burning away, then the tendons, before lastly my bones themselves turned to dust so microscopic that it was impossible to see.

Every hit also seemed to raise more of the dust particles into the air, and it was immediately becoming impossible to see what I was even hitting. My nerves were so destroyed that I couldn't actually tell if I *was* hitting something.

But the punches kept repeating as they struck, each repeat grinding away more-and-more of my limb, turning it into a nub that eventually couldn't punch anymore.

As the last punch landed, it released a potent shockwave that fractured and collapsed the ramp floor and ceiling around us, before I was tossed backwards up the way I'd come, skipping once against the top of the ramp, before flying off into a ceiling lamp, and ending atop the hood of a car.

Smoke was billowing off my stump, which ended right at the elbow joint, or well, where it would've been. Strangely, Brock was wrapped around the end, still in the shape of a gauntlet, giving off the impression that I had a freakishly-tiny right arm, but it was impossible to 'punch' anymore without the elbow joint.

Panda popped out from under me and hopped onto my chest. Even his slight weight made it clear that I had bruises all over and that, once again, several of my ribs were cracked. I was fairly sure I'd also broken a few of my toes, and received a minor concussion.

“That was weird,” he said, looking back at the collapsed ramp.

“Tell me it's dead...”

“Oh, it's dead alright. But it took way more punches than it should've.”

“*What a ride... I feel like I was violated with a steel brush...*” Brock muttered. “*I think I liked it?*”

“I think what happened,” Panda continued, “Is that your skill considered Brock a target, but he seems indestructible, so that's why it didn't end before your arm was rendered no longer functional.”

“So you're saying I can't use the skill while having him equipped?”

“Not exactly, but you'd have to know when to interrupt it. The Siren was reduced to nothingness after the first six punches, when you did around a billion damage or something ridiculous. This recursive math is really quite poorly balanced. Make sure you watch out for the Glitch Hunters since they also seem to use recursive attacks. Granted, the biggest thing that makes it so powerful right now is how Brock multiplies the impact damage.”

I tried to push myself up off the car with my right hand... but it was obviously not there.

“I’ll have to get better at using my left arm,” I told myself, switching to that and getting off the hood that I’d crushed with my body.

“Don’t plan around deleting your arm in the future,” Panda scolded me.

“*Can we go again?*” Brock asked meekly, sounding flustered for some reason. It was making me uncomfortable.

Using my mind, I opened my inventory and equipped the Carapace Suit again. Before I could take a step forward, a ball of pinkish purple smoke appeared in the air before me, quickly popping and dropping a single large Game Coin that I stooped to pick up. With it, my total was brought up to 183, the value of which I had no idea about, as we hadn’t encountered any Merchants yet.

I walked over to where Bee sat.

“You okay?” she asked, closing her book and standing up. She was still a bit wobbly, but seemed better.

“I could use a hand,” I told her.

She looked at the right sleeve of my Suit, which had ‘helpfully’ shrunk to match the new length of my arm.

“Was that meant to be a joke?” she asked. “Also, that looks really weird.”

“Sometimes you don’t have to say something just to fill the silence,” Panda told her.

“You’ve been calling him a moron all day, not like you have the moral high ground here,” she replied.

“You vomited on my boots,” I told her, making it obvious that she was little better.

“Sorry.”

“So, uh, have you noticed we’re still in here?” Panda asked.

“Maybe killing the Boss wasn’t the way to leave?” I wondered.

“Do you think—?” Bee started to ask before an achievement appeared.

Congratulations! You have unlocked an achievement! ✖
<i>‘Maybe we expected too much’</i>
Failed to realize the point of the Dungeon.
<i>The Siren’s Lair was a beautiful and very artistic Sub-Dungeon meant to be a real anxiety-inducing nightmare, wherein Players were forced to solve a multilayered ‘spot the</i>

difference’ puzzle across several floors of the parking garage. It was actually very fair and balanced, to the point that a Level 5 Player could do it, despite the Difficulty Rating applied to the place.

But then you came along and fucked it all up with your dumb stupid idiotic moron ways! You suck! You ruin the fun and variety of Dungeons! And I hope you die soon!

Unfortunately, you did technically clear the Dungeon by killing the Boss, so, while it pains me to do this...

Reward: You get to leave, but don’t expect anything else...

A doorway appeared in the air in front of us, before a powerful sucking air pulled us through and spat us out into the Police Headquarters hallway with all the cells.

I was about to ask ‘What about the loot!?’ when I spotted a red-glowing wisp nearby and stuck my hand in it:

Leftovers of Boss ‘Police Siren’:

20x ‘GAME Coins’

‘Police Siren’s Police Siren’

‘unHaunt Plugin’