

~ Day 131 ~

As I weaved the mana with an iron grasp, my mind quelling any opposition the mana might've had to turn unstable or fluctuating as per its natural state, I barely even noticed the smirk that had crept itself upon my face.

Before me, stood a legion of blood puppets, multiple times more than I had been capable of doing mere hours ago. Although they were nothing more than E-ranked puppets, I could now summon hundreds upon hundreds of them. And if I were to summon the strongest of constructs, I was capable of commanding more than half a dozen D+ ranked blood puppets.

Instead of trying to delicately manipulate and adhere to the mana's chaotic whims to run amok, the source of almost all mage's struggles when summoning it to their own agendas -- I dominated it.

No longer was I at the mercy of the mana's ways, but it at mine.

Of course, I was no omnipotent being that had unrestricted power to control all of the volatile mana saturating the world, but maybe... just maybe... I could one day be.

But this different perspective and way of doing things had wholly changed the fundamental way I performed magic. And it was much, much more powerful.

Working in tandem, **Dominion Mastery**, **Blood Lord**, and **Spell Formation**, they had taken my magic to a whole new level, and armed with the most recent revelation of my perspective I had undergone, I had finally found the key component of what my abilities and powers had been lacking.

"I was thought that you'd never get it through that thick skull of yours." A flat but distinctly feminine voice said to my side.

"With how you handled me over the last week, it shows," I chuckled, glancing towards Lana. "If I didn't know better, that might've actually been what you were trying to do; figuratively and literally..."

Lana didn't respond, looking at the hundreds of blood puppets standing patiently in rows from under that dark cowl of hers. I've still yet to see her face but since she went to such clear lengths to have it remain unseen, I wasn't going to question her.

"Hey, could you help me try something?" I asked suddenly after a short silence.

Just turning her head to look at me, she waited for me to continue.

"Try to fight and destroy one of the puppets," I said, before pausing. "Uh- but not too quickly."

Although I could not see her face under the cowl of darkness, I could almost feel her brow quirk up in question.

"Just do it, I want to try something that I'm not entirely sure will work," I added.

Not giving me any other distinct answer, she merely walked towards the nearest blood puppet I called forth. Lana drew one of her daggers from the scabbard on her hip, watching as the blood puppet lunged for her upon my mental instruction.

Like I asked, she dealt with the construct easily but with a modicum of deliberation at each slash. As the blood puppet accrued damage, leaking the mana that held together with its corporeal form, I focused intently with the will of my mind.

At first, I began becoming disheartened as my efforts went unrewarded. However, as I kept sending the blood puppets at her, one after the other, something... happened.

Instead of the mana dispersing into the air, some actually returned.

Pausing as she watched the faint streams of mana pass through the air and coalesce on me, her posture told me all I needed to know about what she thought of this little trick.

"You're recalling the remnant mana of the golems instead of letting it dissipate." She stated as a matter of fact.

I smiled, feeling the warming sensation of my mana returning to filtrate into my body and core.

"Yeah. Before I had thought the mana that dissipated whenever my constructs took damage or were destroyed was spent mana, but I realized that much of mana was still unused and potent which simply spilled out as a collateral result. " I nodded with a pleasant sigh. "With this, I shouldn't be wasting mana as much as I had in the past, although it does require some effort to forcefully clamp down on the remnant mana trying to escape."

Recalling the many hundreds of blood puppets, or rather what remained of them after Lana's *help*, I straightened my posture and locked gazes with her.

"We'll be leaving very soon," I said, pausing as I was a little unsure how to convey what I wanted to say. "I... I just wanted to thank you for teaching me and for everything you've done for us. Without Lady Menethil and you; Bob, Mia, and especially I, would still be running around like headless chickens... and for that, I want to thank you."

For a short silence, she didn't respond, merely looking at me with an almost curious gaze from under that cowl.

"You're welcome, I enjoyed myself." She said finally, her tone ever flat. "It was a healthy break from the monotony of being Executrix."

Stunned, I hadn't been expected such words, if any, coming from the mouth of Lana seeing as all of the conversations we had exchanged during the week of training had barely been more than the absolutely necessary to communicate.

Nevertheless, I took it in stride, glad to see that the woman was still indeed capable of emotion, although anything but her words told otherwise to that fact.

As the day went on, Mia getting as much tutoring done as she possibly could during these last days in the Menethil household, I went back to the room. There were another few things I had to take care of, but one of them had weighed on my mind with indecision.

Sitting on the edge of the large bed, I looked down at the wooden box on my lap.

The relic.

Of course, I wished nothing more to than just open the damn case, assimilate the relic, and see what changes would happen, but one detail had me second-guessing whether or not I should do so.

Lord Nosferas had to his best ability described the existence of these so-called **Games**, which were conducted by the System itself. According to him, they only took place within certain regions of the world every few decades or centuries, and the next one was apparently coming in very soon.

Missing one of these could be disastrous for any inspiring **Promethean** as the **Games** were essential to further one's heirloom as you can no longer assimilate with the various tertiary relics scattered across the world after having completed the initial stage of an heirloom.

To qualify for these games would mean that a **Sanctioned Lord** would have to have advanced the second stage of their heirloom by collecting all three of their tertiary relics. That would then mean I was only missing one to qualify myself as a participant; the one sitting in my lap.

But was that truly the wisest choice?

Although Nosferas had assured me that the **Games** were no sudden occurrence as they would come with ample notice, it would most likely whisk me away to someplace, leaving behind Mia, Bob, and the tribe until I returned.

I had already discussed this with Mia and Bob, and they of course encouraged me to do it anyway, even if Mia was somewhat apprehensive at the thought. But now that we finally had a proper foothold in the world, thousands of workers, warriors, and so-on joining the tribe, and wasn't liking the thought of leaving them to fend for themselves while I was doing this.

Working towards becoming a **Promethean** was undoubtedly the next step for me in my path to power, and the system wouldn't have chosen me as a Sanctioned Lord if it thought I wasn't going to pursue it when presented the opportunity.

Noticing my foot was tapping on the floor with me realizing it, I stopped it and let out a sigh.

There wasn't truly a choice here.

I could only make sure both I and my tribe were prepared when the time came. I had ambitions, and I wasn't going to let them die here from a little fear.

Dropping a drop of blood on the indentation of the lock, I waited.

[The blood of a **Promethean Candidate** has been detected]

[The **Sanctioned Lord** meets all requirements to unseal the relic]

[Do you wish your **Heirloom of Sanguinity** to consume this relic?]

[Yes/No]

-Yes-

The box opened to reveal the familiar sight of a slab of silver within an inlay of red velvet. I needn't instructions as the heirloom upon my ear was already humming with unabashed excitement at the sight of the unassimilated relic. As if adhering to the incomplete heirloom's call, the relic liquefied into its signature molten silver form.

As it slithered out of the box and up my arm, I watched the process with delight.

The molten silver of the relic finally all disappeared into the heirloom upon my ear, and although I couldn't visibly see what happened, my mental sense allowed me to watch as the already intricate earpiece shifted ever so slightly, its design becoming both more elegant and sinister.

I marveled at the slight but intriguing changes. Clearly, the power and control the heirloom gave me increased, but nothing other than that immediately changed.

There was one thing though, a feeling, almost instinctive ability I could call forth that had appeared after the relic finished assimilating.

Touching upon it, heirloom upon my ear changed in a flash. I could feel the sudden touch of something both hard and malleable flow down to encase my shoulder, continuing down both my chest and arm.

With awe, I watched as molten silver, bespeckled by the occasional glint of crimson, molded itself onto my body. My entire right hand, arm, shoulder, and pec were encased in the heirloom as it slowly turned from molten silver to hardened plates of armor that lined the heirloom in a design very reminiscent of my earpiece, the segmented plates having lines of crimson running underneath where they separated.

Complete its transformation, I felt an instant change in the air around me. While before all my mana had been something that was produced within my core itself, the main distinguishing factor from that of magical monsters and enlightened mages, I could now feel

the ambient mana of the room actually spin around me and enter the heirloom figured like a gauntlet that expended all the way to my neck and over my right pec.

It was... idly consuming wild mana...

~[**Heirloom of Sanguinity - Evolving**]~

[**Heirloom of Sanguinity** has achieved and finalized its 1st-stage!]

[**Heirloom Fragments** bestowed upon followers - 0/3]

[An invitation to the trails have been appointed to the **Sanguine Lord**]

[Candidates qualified - **inadequate**]

[The gates remain closed]