

~ Day 131 ~

Watching the dancing darkness flicker about as Mia attempted to do as she was instructed by her teacher, I couldn't help but let the words of Lord Nosferas bounce around in my head.

*"I want you to kill a **Promethean**,"*

Of course, Nosferas wasn't forcing me to do anything, but I still hadn't declined his request outright. After a lengthy talk with him afterward that continued long into the night, I had gotten a relatively good grasp on what I needed to know. I had also learned of some more disturbing information about this... 'Deiden Archia'.

Apparently a necromancer of the highest order and **Promethean**, he created, or rather 'transformed', Nosferas into a vampire multiple centuries ago. And although he clearly didn't tell me everything, he told me of how his home country, clan, and family was all destroyed by this Nosferas. But not only that, he had taken thousands, upon thousands, of drow captive to experiment upon with his depraved magics.

Nosferas, his mate, and both his two daughters were among the captives; only Nosferas surviving all the torment that he and his family was put through.

The amount of deeply-rooted hatred in that man even after multiple centuries shook me to the core. But he didn't elaborate further on it as it was clearly something still plaguing him to this day.

Other than that, Nosferas had also discussed various matters with me to help me move everything along much smoother than they would otherwise have. From the recruitment of labor and master craftsman, I now not only had my recently gained fame for placing third as a dark horse in the tournament but the city lord of Ebongrave himself had also put in a good word for me. Then including some resources and funds to kickstart my settlement, Nosferas by House Menethil as a proxy had really helped me out.

Although he obviously wanted to do more for me considering how much he actually had to give, he himself had barriers that restricted him from acting freely. Those overlords of his...

Being an entity tied to the higher echelons of monster society, if certain individuals got wind of him assisting me as such, it could bring down an avalanche of trouble down on not only him but also on me. We had to act rather discreetly in our dealings, especially since there were those keeping a close eye on him and reporting back to unknown individuals.

"Sigh..."

We only had a few more days at the most here in Ebongrave as we couldn't stall the recruitment posting any longer and I still had a budding settlement waiting for us back home. Although this city had brought us brief enmity from how the nobles and how our situation was manipulated into joining the tournament, this city was a marvelous one and a place where I had made multiple allies.

I would've loved to stay longer and garner more influence, but my time could be better spent elsewhere. That thought reminded me of something I had to take care of, something I had been putting off until yesterday when Nosferas had helped me realize what my talent was.

[Skill - **Codex** has leveled from 2/20 ⇒ 3/20]

[Skill - **Blood, Shadow Magic** has leveled from 14/15 ⇒ 15/15 and can now be **advanced (Greater)!**]

[Skill - **Blood Shaping** has leveled from 11/15 ⇒ 15/15 and can now be **advanced (Greater)!**]

[Skill - **Blitz** has leveled from 1/15 ⇒ 5/15]

[Skill - **Imbue Rake** has leveled from 9/15 ⇒ 14/15]

[Skill - **Ambrosial Senses** has leveled from 6/15 ⇒ 8/15]

[Skill - **Mana Mending** has leveled from 9/10 ⇒ 10/10 and can now be **advanced!**]

[Skill - **Onyx Body** has leveled from 8/15 ⇒ 13/15]

[Skill - **Mana Control** has leveled from 10/15 ⇒ 12/15]

[Skill - **Stealth** has leveled from 5/15 ⇒ 10/15]

[Skill - **Mana Mending** has leveled from 12/15 ⇒ 15/15 and can now be
advanced (Greater)!]

[Skill - **Blood Born** has leveled from 9/15 ⇒ 12/15]

[Skill - **Lesser Eldritch Vitality** has leveled from 9/15 ⇒ 11/15]

[Skill - **Shadow Manifestation** has leveled from 8/15 ⇒ 12/15]

[Skill - **Mana Condensation** has leveled from 5/15 ⇒ 8/15]

Although I hadn't really gotten any levels out of the tournament, my skills had sky-rocketed from the intense fights against monsters much stronger than myself, training with the monster of a teacher that was Executrix Lana, and the revelations I've gotten during all the time I've spent in the city.

I would've wanted to advance these skills much earlier as I had been accruing them throughout the tournament, Lana had advised me not to. Until I understood my own capabilities and talent, I should not be rushing the skills that would ultimately define how my fighting style develops.

But now that I've realized the avenue of control through domination, I can work towards creating my legion.

While the massive level increases to my skills had been a great contributor to my joy, the fact that I had a whole three skills on the cusp of advancing into the fourth tier was most of the reason why I had been itching to disregard Lana's advice and simply advance them on the spot.

No longer though, it was time.

-Advance, Blood-Shadow Magic!-

Skill advancement (Greater) - Blood, Shadow Magic
Choose one advancement
-Crimson Umbra Mastery-
Conjure the shadows of the crimson death ~ Provides the ability to imbue the power of Blood Magic into the elusive realms of Shadow Magic .
-Dominion Mastery-
By the power of blood, the liquid essence of life, dominate as the shadows beckon to your every whim, and call ~ Provides the ability to imbue entities with the dominating power of blood and the harrowing domains of shadow.
-Corruption Mastery-
Corrupt your foes, taint their life and twist their sanity by afflicting them the despairing powers of blood and shadow ~ Provides the ability to corrupt entities with the power of shadow and blood, infecting the essence of their bodies, and the sanity of their minds.
-Sanguine Shade Mastery-
Amalgamate the powers of shadow and blood, call forth the shades of life ~ Provides the ability to manipulate, attack, and rob your foes of the absolute power of life and shadow.

Reading the available options, there wasn't a doubt in my mind from right out of the gate as to what advancement to take. While I did comb through the information multiple times to make sure that I wasn't overlooking anything, my choice was ultimately locked to that one advancement that spoke the truest to me.

Dominion Mastery.

I was honestly quite surprised by this skill advancement seeing as I had no real idea what this skill could possibly evolve into. Seeing as **Blood, Shadow Magic** was essentially just a skill signifying the power of and my access to using the two schools of magic, **Shadow** and **Blood**. so when I saw that it could be advanced rather than maxing out instead, I had just expected to be pretty much the same with just greater benefits.

But lo and behold, achieving actual competency in the two magics awarded me with a specialized type of fused magic that would greatly enhance a concept and utilization of the magics.

I didn't contemplate my choice further though, I had decided.

-Dominion Mastery!-

[Skill - **Shadow, Blood Magic** has been advanced to **Dominion Mastery!**]

[For advancing a skill, you receive 4 skill points!]

Noting the skill point reward, I smiled. Already extremely curious, I conjured my mana.

Instantly, I noticed there was a distinct difference when I attempted to conjure a formation or even to fuse the two different magics together as they worked seamlessly with each other. This was quite odd as before they had been rather unmixable.

Putting the mana away, I continued onto the next advancement.

-Advance, Blood Shaping!-

Skill advancement (**Greater**) - **Blood Shaping**

Choose one advancement

-Blood Lord-

Within the grasp of the **Blood Lord**, is the absolute authority over the essence of life ~ Control, manipulate, and shape blood to your will. Has innate power over blood, and can consume mana to enhance the power of **Blood Lord** and any **Blood Magic** related skills.

Surprised both by the fact that there was only one option and that the option seemed incredibly powerful, I didn't hesitate to advance the skill.

-Blood Lord!-

[Skill - **Blood Shaping** has been advanced to **Blood Lord!**]

[For advancing a skill, you receive 4 skill points!]

Although the change I felt in my body didn't seem alien or much too different, the potency of how well I felt like I could sense and was in control of my blood and that of others had risen explosively.

Wanting to test this out as soon as possible, I pulled up the next advancement, getting impatient to already try out my new two skills.

-Advance, Mana Mending!-

Skill advancement - **Mana Mending**

Choose one advancement

-Greater Mana Mending-

Uses a gland to release a very potent healing compound within your body.
Can use mana to significantly enhance the effect of the healing compound.

The rather... *limited* choices were unsurprising seeing as **Mana Mending** has already advanced once, taking a divergent path rather than the greater option. Not that I really minded though. The skill was merely a 2nd-tier skill while it still was extremely valuable as if my other regeneration and defense skills failed me, it could bring me back from the brink of death, and already has before.

I went on.

-Greater Mana Mending!-

[Skill - **Mana Mending** has been advanced to **Greater Mana Mending**!]

[For advancing a skill, you receive 3 skill points!]

-Advance, Spell Formation!-

Skill advancement (Greater) - Spell Formation
Choose one advancement
-Formation Constructs-
Nothing is more fearsome than the endless legions of the arcane ~ Provides the ability to create formations with the power of glyphs and to construct cohesive formations in great magnitudes.
-Grand Formations-
Magic's greatest form is when it's used to enact the powerful and world-shaking spells that it's capable of ~ Provides the ability to create formations with the power of glyphs and to create extremely powerful spells.
-Spellnomicon-
The gospel of magic is any true mage's most powerful tool ~ Provides the ability to create formations with the power of glyphs and allows for a much wider array of spell formations. Can consume other spells to potentially log their glyph formations.
-Formational Imbuement-
The power of formations is boundless, to create majestic magical monuments, or gargantuan instruments of destruction ~ Provides the ability to create large-scale formations with the power of glyphs and to imbue formations into the areas, objects, and structures to enact powerful spells.

Now, this was where it got interesting...

All those skill advancements seemed incredibly useful, from **Grand Formations**'s promise of much more powerful spells to that **Formational Imbuement** advancement that almost seemed like a large-scale enchanter of some sort.

Although each skill seemed intriguing and powerful, I quickly narrowed it down to the two first, **Formation Constructs** and **Grand Formations**.

While **Spellnomicon** seemed full of boundless utility, I had already had more than enough of that. Even enough to be harmful to myself as proven by the state my fighting style was in before Lana beat some sense into me of how I should properly utilize my skills, abilities, and so on.

As for the **Formation Imbuement**, it simply didn't seem to mesh all that well with **Blood Magic** and **Shadow Magic**. How exactly was I supposed to use those two schools of magic with what I could read from the description?

With those two scrapped, it was down to **Grand Formations** and **Formation Constructs**. Again, I quickly turned to one of them; **Formation Constructs**. Of course, **Grand Formations** was outright just good with bigger and better spells, but **Formation Constructs**, although rather vague in what it actually did, seemed to be exactly what I'm looking for now that I have discovered what I had a talent for.

-Formation Constructs!-

[Skill - Spell Formation has been advanced to Formation Constructs!]

[For advancing a skill, you receive 4 skill points!]

Rubbing my hands together with excitement, I muttered to myself.

"Let's see what we can do with these..."