

## Chapter -43

The hallway that the Red door dropped us into, where the Maximillian twins had been, led to a large rectangular room that almost looked like an indoor skate park, thanks to ramps and bowls dug into the stone floor. There were dead bodies scattered around, and it was clear that the twins had killed them before running into us.

As we moved through the room, the tremor of the pursuing Glitch Hunter was constantly felt through the floor, which was quite ominous and made it impossible for me to feel like I could take a break. I wondered absentmindedly if it was some kind of intimidation aura he possessed, it was certainly a long time since I’d felt this kind of sensation.

From the skate-park-esque room sprouted three different hallways and we picked the leftmost one at the behest of Panda. This one led down a snaking tunnel only five feet wide. Bee was sticking to me as I ran in front of her.

Little-by-little the tremors in the floor abated, as we put more distance between us and the Hunter, but they didn’t disappear entirely.

“He must have something similar to your ‘Dungeon-Break’ ability,” Panda commented.

“*Smack ‘im with me!!*” Brock squealed eagerly.

I lifted up the hammer as we continued down the ponderous tunnel. “I already tried that and it didn’t work.”

“*Just smack ‘im harder!!*”

“You didn’t use your Punch Harder on him,” Panda remarked, actually paying attention to what Brock was saying.

“My plugin prevents it, and he might have the Interrupt ability as well, so I thought it was too much of a risk.”

“...Wait, you were actually being cautious?” The way he said it made it seemed like he didn’t believe I had the capacity for such a thing.

“Panda, Gambit isn’t a moron like you think,” Bee defended me.

“Thanks...” I said.

“I don’t know, the evidence would disagree with him on that.”

Suddenly the tunnel ended in a wall with a single hole in it. It looked like a slide similar to the kind found in indoor pools. Except, of course, it was made of the strangely-smooth organic-looking stone and there was no light within, so it was a sinister darkness that awaited within.

“Ah, crap...” Panda commented.

“Should we enter it?” Bee asked hesitantly.

“We don’t know where it goes,” the plushie replied wisely.

I started lifting my legs up into it, before sitting down on the edge and steadying myself against the wall. “We don’t have a choice,” I told them. “We know that there’s a scary motherfucker back the way we came, and I get the feeling that nothing else in here even compares to how dangerous he is.”

“That’s a good point, actually,” Panda said, once again surprised. “Wait... did evolving your Class increase your Intelligence?” he asked.

“It turned it from ‘TBD’ and into a frowning smiley, so not sure.”

Bee put a carapace-covered green finger against the side of the Nerdy Spectacles she’d unlocked from killing Ophelia, then said, “Appraise.”

As she, I guessed, looked at my nonsensical Status, she nodded thoughtfully to herself.

“I think a frowning smiley is mildly better than ‘To-be-determined’.”

“Whatever,” I groaned. “Let’s just get going.”

The tremors were picking back up again, so it was clear that the Glitch Hunter was coming closer.

“I’ll be right behind you,” Bee promised and I pushed myself down the dark stone tube.

“*Weeeeeee...!*” screamed Brock excitedly.

I’d only been sliding down for a few seconds, when an achievement appeared.

<b>Congratulations! You have unlocked an achievement!</b> <sup>x</sup>
<i>‘Nyctophobia’</i>
<b>Ventured down a dark path without fear.</b>
<i>You know, not a lot of people would confidently go down a pitch-black tube slide with an unknown destination, but I guess you’re just built different, huh?</i>
<b>Reward:</b> <i>‘Transition Lenses’</i> Passive

**‘Transition Lenses’**

x

*Passive*

*The System is a real jokester. Most of the items and skills are made by Departments, like the Item Conjurers, but they follow the blueprints provided by the System, so you can tell it’s a bit off its rocker.*

*Anyway, this is one of those rare Passives that isn’t some kind of strange jab at your personality nor has a weird double-edged effect. No, this is a real honest-to-the-Gods Passive with a proper effect.*

*You won’t be seeing a lot of Passives nor Abilities like this, so cherish it while you can.*

***Your eyes now have transition lenses, meaning your vision grows accustomed to the light of your surroundings, allowing you to stare at the sun, as well as pitch-darkness, and still be able to see just fine.***

*Quite useful for eclipses as well as spelunking without a flashlight.*

Only a few moments passed and the darkness I was sliding down through became a kind of light-grey that made it possible to see the details of the tube ceiling above me.

“An actually useful reward for once,” I muttered appreciatively. It was a proper passive too, like the kind you’d find in a fantasy game.

While I was sliding down on my back, the smooth stone apparently completely frictionless, I pulled out the heavy battery-like Plugin I’d gotten earlier and inspected it:

***‘unHero Plugin’***

x

—**PLUGIN**—

*For the unHeroic deed of killing a popular and kind-hearted  
Player in cold blood, you have earnt the title of ‘villain’.*

*Wear it proudly.*

*It’s time to manifest your dark inner self.*

**Plugin Ability:** *gasm.org*

**Plugin Passive:** *Anti Heroism*

**Weight:** 14.851815 Pandas

**‘gasm.org’**

x

*Plugin Ability*

*No, I don’t know why it’s called that.*

*Everyone hates copycats and posers. Someone once said  
‘Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery’, but they’re  
obviously wrong. The only truly evil thing in this world is  
plagiarism, everything else is up for debate!*

*By saying ‘Gotcha!’ while witnessing another Player’s  
ability, you can steal it until you decide to use it or 1 hour  
has passed.*

*To use the stolen ability, you have to say ‘Catch it!’*

*Seriously, who is coming up with this stuff?*

**Cooldown:** *1 hour*

<b>‘Anti Heroism’</b>	x
<i>Plugin Passive</i>	
<i>Why bother hunting down monsters when you can make your own?</i>	
<i>While fighting Players that are considered ‘Morally Good’, all your damage dealt to them also raises their <b>Insanity Gauge</b>.</i>	
<i>Side-effects include: monologuing about evil plans; maniacal laughter; world-domination ideas involving lasers; glowing-red eyes; &amp; an astounding aptitude for acquiring henchmen.</i>	

With a sigh, I stowed it back into my inventory.

“I guess it’d be good for this Event,” I considered, “But having a high knockback and the ability to teleport is way more useful, although I do like being able to steal someone’s ability.”

Brock stopped squealing in glee and asked, “*You talkin’ to me?*”

“Just thinking out loud,” I replied.

“*Yer not quite right in the head, mate.*”

“And you’re a talking hammer.”

“*Touché. Got me there, didn’t ya.*”

Suddenly I felt the ground curve up and my stomach drop, as the tube did a goddamn loop-de-loop. Brock made an excited noise, while I clenched my teeth. I’d honestly never been a big fan of rollercoasters, but the speed and G-forces of this stone tube slide was easily rivalling the ones I’d tried.

As we came out the 360-degree vertical turn, I’d picked up even more speed and zoomed down on my back fast enough that I was beginning to worry about the landing, wherever it might be.

“*Let’s go again!!*” Brock yelled excitedly.

I pulled out the Pocket-Watch and flipped open the lid:

**Time remaining:**

4.20468671E-6 millennium

**Kills remaining:**

10

No sooner had the information appeared than the tunnel began to brighten as I was reaching some kind of aperture at the bottom. My eyes slowly began to adjust to the light coming closer, while I put away the Pocket-Watch. Then I began preparing for impact with whatever lay at the end.

“*Hope there’s a ramp!!*” Brock said, and, as though the bastard had manifested it with his wishful thinking, I saw that there was indeed a small ramp at the end.

“You’ve got to be fu—”

I hit the ramp and was sent flying into the air, spinning around slowly and seeing the features of the room. There was a bright-green carpet of moss stretched from wall-to-wall of the large rectangular room, and many Players were lounging around complacently.

As I finished my rotation through the air, I spotted a familiar person, who, as fate would have it, I was on a direct collision course with. He had his back turned to me and by the time anyone noticed my trajectory, it was too late to warn him.

In a tangle of limbs and a loud groan of surprise and forcefully-exhaled air, I collided with the man and tumbled to the moss-covered floor, which was so soft and squishy that it totally cancelled-out my impact. Neither of us took any real damage from the crash, but, from looking at the guy’s beet-red face, it was impossible to tell.

“What’s your fudging problem, guy!?”

I got to my feet and scanned him with my Looking Glass. I’d gotten good enough at using my inventory mentally that I could seemingly manifest anything within to my hand with a single thought.

Level 8	'Steve'	Player <sup>x</sup>
<i>“Why does everyone call me Hawaiian Shirt Guy?”</i>		
<i>Class: Birthday Boy</i>		
<i>Main Attribute(s): Vitality</i>		
<i>Steve’s origins aren’t interesting, so let’s instead talk about the Unique Class that he possesses.</i>		

*After taking the ‘Party Never Ends’ Passive and hearing ‘Happy Birthday’ being said to him a hundred times, a rare event occurred for Steve: the **Spontaneous Class Change!***

*As you might imagine, this event allows someone to swap their Class, but not just to anything they want, but rather to a Unique Class that they have unlocked the specific requirements for.*

*Now, you may wonder, what is the benefit of the ‘Birthday Boy’ Class? It’s quite simple, really. Everyone likes the Birthday Boy, so he’s never short on friends and popularity. It’s his birthday after all. With the ability to leech experience from all his friends and skills based around building platonic relationships, he’s able to turn his friendships into power.*

*That’s right, he’s basically become a Care Bear.*

*Also, he hates your guts.*

“Happy Birthday,” I told him.

“I wish people would stop saying that! This System is a capital C for ‘Crap’! I swear!”

“Weeeee...!” I heard someone yell as they sailed through the air. I looked up and saw Bee with Panda on her shoulder come flying to the exact same spot I was standing in. With a large step to the side, I avoided colliding with her, though Hawaiian Shirt Guy was not as lucky.

After repeating the exact same thing as me just a second prior, Bee got to her feet, then said, “Happy Birthday.”

“F you two!” he said angrily and stormed off.

“Why did I just say that?” Bee wondered, as we watched him leave to join some other Players lying on their back in the soft moss carpet further away.

“Cause he’s the Birthday Boy,” I replied.

“Ah, that makes sense.”

“*Look at all these weaklings! Let’s get to smacking!!*”

I scanned the room, then froze-up when I saw someone I’d hoped not to run into again. She spotted me as well, with Steve quickly joining her, before they started gathering up a bunch of Players around them, forming a mob.

“Is that Annabella Exposición?” Panda asked.

“We should get out of here,” I said, taking Bee by the arm.

Before we even got a few feet towards the exit of the large room, people were yelling my name, and not in the ‘we love you!’ way.

“Is that a pitchfork?” Bee asked.

A moment later, said pitchfork was hurled through the air at us.