

## Chapter 2.60 Wrapped Up

The Party gathered around the center stage where the beam of light from above illuminated them.

“So I guess you can just zombie anything now, then?” Humphrey crossed his arms.

Sally shrugged. “You’re ex-System, you tell me.”

Archie yawned. “Looks like a mix of your abilities, the one that increases your disease chance, but also is guaranteed if you eat brains, but also now your zombies have the same chance, and I forgot where I was going with this.”

“Can we not call it a disease though?” She wagged her finger in the air. “Makes it sound *nasty*.”

“You just had half your face blown off and you’re fine with it,” Edward narrowed his blue eyes.

“Doesn’t make it *nasty*.”

Lucius remained silent, either listening to something specific or just trying to tune the rest of them out.

“Anyway,” Sally continued, “point of order is we need to decide what we are doing with this room. Clearly it’s full of stuff, but it could be trapped or cursed. Who would just stick a giant treasure room in the middle of the dungeon, right?”

Humphrey scratched his chin. “Yes. I see your point, although the chests that were destroyed didn’t seem to be trapped.”

“We killed the guardians of the treasure, so perhaps that’s the challenge here?” Edward sighed and looked around the room.

“Both fair points,” Sally relented with a bow, “but we’ve all seen how insidious this dungeon is in wanting to cause us harm. Something so overtly enticing would surely be just to lure us into danger.”

Lucius quietly continued to look around.

“What do you think, Archie?” The zombie kneeled down to pick him up, so that he was more at their eye level.

“A nap would be nice.”

“What about the potential traps? Or if this place is worthy of looting?”

The cat yawned. “What more could you really want?”

Sally pouted. Whether he meant she had all the treasures life could offer with this found family of goofballs, or that her Inventory was already cluttered with enough garbage - either didn't matter.

"The cat has spoken." She held him up and lowered her head in reverence. "Let's just get the magic stone and be gone from this place."

"I have no love for this place," the Death Knight nodded. "Not that I prefer the endless Wastes, *ha-ha*."

"There's no door out of here," Lucius eventually spoke, causing them all to pause and look around the room.

Indeed, aside from the one they entered from, and the hole in the ceiling, the large room had no other doors or exits. Sally climbed up atop the golden chest to glare around. "That can't be right - surely there is more dungeon down here. Although, I'm basing that on absolutely no prior knowledge."

"The crystal is not here." Humphrey sighed and leaned against the chest. "I had hoped we had gone the correct direction."

Lucius had his gloved hand cupped to his misty chin. Ellipses, followed by question marks, slowly appeared beside him as he thought.

Sally ground her teeth together. They always went the correct direction, even when they didn't. The path would just change to where they were now headed. You were allowed to do that - it was in the guidebook she planned to write once they had taken over the world. Or escaped it. Jury was still out on what she wanted, or what was even possible at this point.

"I don't think that is a treasure chest, Sally."

She looked down at the Shade, who was prodding at the side of it. It looked mostly like some kind of container, and was in the treasure room, surrounded by containers filled with who-knows-what because she didn't want to get cursed. With a sigh, she hopped down from it.

The Death Knight tilted his head. "I suppose it almost looks like a coffin? Perhaps this is some manner of tomb."

"Dibs, then. I'm the expert on tombs." She twirled around and made the show of pushing Humphrey back slightly.

They watched as she turned back and pulled on the lid, straining even with her strength. Eventually, it began to move and slid to the side - as much as it wanted to return to the closed position. It looked like something was inside, but she couldn't quite make out what.

She leaned forward to grab it and then fell into an abyss. The tomb closed behind her and plunged her into darkness. "Should have expected that," she murmured to herself as she fell through nothingness.

And then she was sitting on cold flooring.

A large room peaked at the top to a point like a pyramid, that was lit in a strange green hue. Statues adorned the left and right sides of the room, while four decorated pillars rose from beside a walkway up to the slanted ceiling. Engravings illuminated the back wall, past an ornate sarcophagi standing in the middle of the room in a slightly raised area, bright light shining across the golden coffin covered in patterns and gemstones.

Sally stood to better look around. The Engravings on the far wall look to be of kings and queens. Three kings, a queen, a king, and then three queens. Each looked similar, wearing a headdress and an air of regal vision. Around them were carvings of people dancing, harvests, and possibly other things that her brain couldn't process because she became distracted by the elaborate casket.

On account of it shuffling.

Something to add to her undead hotel, perhaps. She grinned to herself and readied her hand to cast the spell.

The casket burst open and wrappings shot out around the four pillars, encircling them as a figure rose up into the air.

*"You dare enter my pyramid and try to steal from me?"* The female voice boomed out as two glowing yellow eyes crackled with power from beneath aged wrappings.

"No?" Sally smiled, trying to think of if she had taken anything or not.

A fifth wrapping shot out from underneath the figure, quickly snaking around Sally's legs. As she went to hop away, the mummy dragged her to the floor and quickly up into the air.

Hanging upside down, she now came face to face with her assailant.

"You're not like the *others*..." the mummy narrowed her eyes. "You're undead. And kind of adorable."

"Guilty," Sally grinned back.

The lighting in the room shifted to a more comforting amber, and Sally was lowered to the floor as the mummy sank to the ground herself. The wrappings retracted from the pillars and returned to her body.

"Sorry for the theatrics, hun. I figured it would have been some nasty adventurers."

"Not quite." Sally held out a hand to be shaken. "I'm Sally."

"Sally, what a lovely name. I'm Norah." She smiled warmly down towards the zombie. "They used to call me the Ever-living. Now I seem to be the ever-undead." With a wrapped arm extended, she gestured towards the engravings on the wall.

"You're the last one?" Sally asked, tilting her head.

“All of them,” Norah smiled. “Granted with the power to be reborn as the Eternal Ruler of the wastes. Being a King seemed like the most prudent thing at the start... patriarchal society and all. After trying out being Queen, I just liked it more.”

Sally nodded. Being a Queen was pretty grand. That was some steep backstory for a world that had only existed for a month or two - but that information was from Humphrey, who was an unreliable narrator at best.

“Want to join up with my undead Party and rule the world?” She asked, rocking between her heels and toes with hands clasped behind her back.

“A very generous offer, hun. However, I have all I need here. This is my place to rule, you see, and-“

With a hideous scraping of metal, Humphrey dropped out of the void onto the stone floor, standing from his crouch surrounded by a small cloud of dust and flourishing his greatsword to the ready.

Norah blinked. “Actually, *sure*. How do I sign up?”

Sally beamed and waved the Death Knight over, as he looked only partly confused that the zombie was talking to the potential enemy instead of any real danger.

“Humphrey, this is Norah. Norah, Humphrey.” Her smile couldn’t get any wider.

“Pleasure,” he nodded towards the mummy.

“Humphrey is like my adoptive father figure.”

Norah nodded. “He certainly has quite the figure.”

The Death Knight stood still, impassively looking between the two women. “Looking for the Memory Crystal,” he eventually blurted out.

“We’re kind of lost, though,” Sally added. “They all follow me, but I have a terrible sense of direction.” She punched Humphrey as he nodded along.

“Unfortunately you are right, hun.” Norah smiled. Slight gaps between her bandaging revealed gray-blue undead skin, with dark gray hair flowing out from the off-white wrappings around her head. “What you seek is at the pinnacle of the pyramid.”

“Ah, *nuts*.” Sally pouted. “Are the others coming down? Oh, you need to meet Theo, Norah. He’s a bit of a dweeb but he’s like...” she rubbed her chin on how best to describe it.

“He’s special to you?” Norah tilted her head, her gaze going between the Death Knight and the zombie as her warm smile continued.

“Yeah, but I’m totes tsundere about it. The whole undead thing, you know?”

Humphrey eventually processed a reply. “The others are too weak to shift the lid.”

Norah held up a hand. "Treasure room, right?" She clicked her fingers. A brief wave of energy flowed around them.

The three of them were now in the treasure room, the rest of the Party startled by their sudden appearance.

"Norah. Lucius, Edward, and Archie. Should I be referring to you as Queen Norah?"

"No need, hun." Norah gave her a sad smile. "I no longer actually have subjects to rule. It is just my pyramid and what lies within."

Sally wondered if she should tell her about the monsters they kill and traps they broke - but that seemed like something better left as water under the bridge. Her bridge, her waterway, but it was done now. Maybe her subjects had been erased due to the dragon's meddling with the Wastes. That could be a good thread to drag her along to help them. Although, the Death Knight might be the only motivation the ex-Queen needed.

With another click of bandages fingers, they were now in a different room. Pointed at the peak, with streams of amber sunlight gleaming through thin slits in the slanted ceiling.

Almost a mirror of Norah's chamber. This one instead had a large crystal hanging in the middle of the room. Almost two feet in height, it shone through all the colors of the rainbow in turn, like shifting oil on water. The glow illuminated the floor and their faces.

"See, Humps," Sally punched him on the plated arm. "Told you going the wrong way would take us to where we wanted."

The Death Knight looked down at the cat, who looked back up at him.

"It is time, little brother."

Archie nodded. "I am ready to be absorbed, big brother."