

## ~ Day 109 ~

It didn't require me any prompting to get Mia and Bob to tell me all about their new skills and traits as they were more than happy to show off their improvements.

From what I gathered by their explanation, Bob's offensive capabilities had taken a massive leap whereas Mia's control over her magic had gotten an equally large increase.

Including their base stat increase from just evolving, it was evident more than ever that the advancement to a tier-4 evolution was a milestone for any monster, and their power and capabilities would rise in turn.

Out of the both of them, Mia had gotten a skill and Bob a trait, which really caught my attention.

### Greater Draugr - New Trait

**-Aura of Life and Death- NEW**

Your presence has adopted the aspects of Life and Death.

### Elder Drow - New Skill

Name	Tier	LVL
<b>-Fine Mana Manipulation- NEW</b>	4	1/20

Bend and manipulate the magical energy of the world to your whim.

Bob's new trait was quite vague in what it actually did, but was clearly portrayed in the new air of danger around him. Before where he had simply felt imposing, as if he could strike at

any moment, he now felt like an unstoppable force of nature - bearing the destructive powers of life and death.

But even though the description didn't really offer up any information, it came with quite an intriguing new ability that Bob could instinctively call forth. With this trait, Bob could create what I supposed was a domain all around him.

In a dome that moved with him as the center, he could envelop a small part of a battlefield in his presence where his aura became superimposed on everything, its strength many times what it usually was just bellowing from his body.

In this domain, he could use his aura as a tangible tool to both invigorate his allies with the life aspect and induce fear or terror in the hearts of foes with the death aspect. Undoubtedly, this trait would grow as he grew, and I could only imagine how powerful it might become in the future, not to mention what it might be able to do once he became more familiar with the trait.

As for Mia, I was shocked to see that she had received a tier-4 skill. Even I had yet to advance any of my skills to that point, so I had no idea how powerful it might be. However, Mai quickly proved to me how useful and overwhelming one of such a tier could be.

Although it sounded very alike the skill **Mana Control** which the both of us already possessed, it was in fact different. Whereas **Mana Control** was a skill that made it much easier for us to handle and control our own mana, **Fine Mana Manipulation** was attuned to bending and shaping any mana or magic to her will.

That meant she not only had the ability to affect the ambient mana saturating the world, but she could also forcibly take control over the mana of magical objects, creatures, and even other's magics.

Plus, it simply gave her that much more control over her own magic as she could literally effect it on every level possible which was perfect for a mental mage like her as such magic required immense finesse.

When I thought back, I realized something. It seemed that all who advance to the evolution 4th-tier got one especially powerful and strong skill or trait. When I evolved, I got **Stygian Transformation**, a skill clearly much more overwhelming than just any other skill or trait.

Comparing that to Mia and Bob here, Bob's **Aura of Life and Death** trait, and Mia's **Fine Mana Manipulation**, a tier 4 skill, it became rather clear that this must be the case as those were much better than anything of the other stuff they got.

Anyways, we had tested **Fine Mana Manipulation** out on some of my spells to see one of the skill's seemingly many abilities, but it proved not as easy as just that. While she could somewhat tamper with my spell, tweaking my magic slightly, if I was expecting it and merely struggled against her manipulation, it became many times more difficult and mana-draining for her.

Combined with the fact she was still very inept at using this skill and her newfound magical abilities, the skill was quite limited in its use at dispelling and taking control over other's magic for now. But even so, this new skill gave me a fantastic idea.

For a while now, Mia's only physical weapon had been the two twin daggers I made for her, not that they had seen much use as her physical capabilities weren't on par with magical ones - especially now that she was a 4th-tier mage.

As such, her overwhelming control of mana and magic gave me the inspiration for a weapon that might just work for her. But that had to wait for now as we had other matters to attend to.

"Soo.... why is our guide charmed?" I threw a thumb over my shoulder at the glassy-eyed ratkin staring dumbly out into the distance.

Giving me a harrumph and crossing her arm under her chest, her cute little nose scrunching into a scowl as she shot the ratkin an annoyed glance.

"The rat wouldn't shut up about killing those damn nobles." She scoffed. "I mean, we were already going to enthrall him to keep shut about of our powers but now that he had seen us kill three nobles, he has become quite the liability. I questioned him under my magic so he of

course wouldn't be able to lie, and it wasn't surprising when he admitted that he would've ratted us out the second he got the opportunity."

"We should just have him guide us the rest of the way and dispose of him." She added.

"I agree, but we're not out of the woods yet." I scowled. "It seems that we'll have to give up on the tournament and that relic as we can no longer stay in the city. We've killed three scions of three different noble houses, and if their strength was anything to go by, their respective houses should have individuals with even more power."

"Why?" She perked up, clearly flustered to hear that. "Other than us, only our guide knows that we were the ones who did it..."

I shook my head with a sigh.

"I would've hoped it was that simple," I said. "But I'd be a fool to think that those nobles don't have some way or another to find out that are the perpetrators, so we have to hurry out of the city. It would seem that we have finally overstayed our welcome."

I signaled to Bob with the wave of my hand.

"Pack your things, we're leaving now."

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It took us considerably less time getting back to the surface than getting all the way down to the 4th-layer as we were moving at full speed. With our guide carried by the lean hulk that was Bob and Mia carried by me, much to her chagrin, it took us little less than two days getting to the transportation platform that would take us directly to the surface, skipping the early layers.

We also got through the checkpoint right at the restricted entrance with no hassle. I had especially made sure to have Mia wear a robe that would hide her features as I already knew how the monsters of the city reacted to Drow, but now that she was an Elder Drow, I couldn't imagine what such a ruckus would cause.

And that attention was something we definitely didn't need at the moment.

We just needed to get our mounts out of the stables and the orcs readied, then head to the recruitment market and notify the workers to pack their things, then set off for back home. Although it was a shame that we wouldn't be able to get any of the masters and specialized workers with us as we had still found something to sufficiently entice the stubborn bastards, but we didn't have a choice in the matter, unfortunately.

We had to get out of the city - now.

However, as we arrived at the resort, those hopes were been quickly dashed.

What met us instead of the many eager servants and maids, was a large group of powerful monsters that looked wholly pissed off.

"Those damn bastards already know..." I cursed quietly as we halted in front of them.

I wasn't sure if we should simply haul ass at this point, try and make our escape, or stay put as the laws of Ebongrave should still protect us from being hunted down in the streets.

Fighting the monsters before us wasn't an option as the unmistakable auras of C-ranked monsters inundated from multiple of the figures.

That feeling Ursa, the beastkin and only other C-rank I've met, had been giving off matched these figures. Although I had been unsure if the lizardman noble had reached the C- rank after transforming, I was now certain that he hadn't as the aura of a C-rank monster was fundamentally different.

The two groups blocking our path were of two different evolutionary lineages. The Lycans and the Lizardmen. I was a bit surprised to not see the plant-monster thingy's house - House Mandrake if I remembered correctly. But it wasn't really the time to be wondering about such details.

While the group of Lizardmen was much smaller than the Lycans, they were clearly many times stronger than their fellow wolf nobles as a whole three of their members gave off the aura of C-ranks.

The rage and hatred thrown directly at us inundated us under overwhelming pressure, almost making Bob and Mia fall to their knees if not for my intervention.

Although my will and presence were beyond powerful for my level of strength, it still wasn't enough to beat back their auras, only softening it if I were to. But it was its defensive capabilities with **A Sovereign's Undying Will** that wholly outshined even the C-ranks' presences as they simply fell flat against my aura like flies hitting a wall, much to their astonishment.

With shading Mia and Bob under my aura, they defiantly shot back gazes of fury at the nobles.

The tension in the air was palpable as crowds had already gathered far away to observe the scene but making damn sure they weren't caught up in the possibility of this turning to blows.

Taking one step forward, a lizardman, decked in ostentatious clothing and jewels of gold that contrasted his emerald scales, made himself known by trying to give a shove with his aura. However, like before, it felt flat, only egging on his already flaring anger.

"You!" He hissed, a forked tongue slipping out to taste the air. "You're the rabble that murdered my son!"

Frowning, I looked the man in his reptilian eyes that showed of the same arrogance that he had seen in the scion I had killed.

"I don't have the faintest idea of what you're talking about." I simply stated, making my face devoid of any readable emotion.

This only seemed to further infuriate the large lizardman and make the Lycans also take a step forward.

"You dare lie to the Sinlore patriarch!" One of the lizardmen flanking the head hissed as if this was something of the greatest injustice.

"You dirty commoners will pay for this crime, thinking that you could lay your filthy hands on a noble and get away with it - despicable!" The Lycan woman who spearheaded the wolfkin howled.

"I will cast **Shadow Magic** on you both, can you keep it with your **Dark Magic** even if I let go of it?" I suddenly asked Mia in a low tone.

"I... yes, but what are you going to do?" Mia asked back, worry evident in her voice.

"If push comes to shove, you guys run and I'll stall," I simply stated.

"But Master-" Mia protested with Bob shooting a conflicted gaze between me and Mia, clearly not wanting to leave me behind but also not going to throw Mia's life away by disobeying my order.

"Mia, I mean this in the sweetest way possible, but you both are keeping me from being able to just fly away, so just listen," I said back, the sternness in my voice brokering no quarter.

"Enough with you three!" The Lizardman hissed, not at all liking how we were completely disregarding his continued monologue of how us 'commoners should know our places.

Summoning a spiked club ornamented in what resembled obsidian and gold from what I guessed was a **[Ring of Holding]**, the Lizardman began stalking toward us which everybody in tow.

"Get ready fo-" I whispered before suddenly being cut off by a new overwhelming aura over superimposing onto the confluence of the nobles' presences.

Although it was nowhere as strong as the noble's combined auras, it was much more terrifying for some inexplicable reason that had my hairs stand on end.

Standing in between the nobles and us, a lithe and tall figure had appeared out of thin air as if it had always been there. The body shape told me of a woman, although you could never be certain as their face was covered in a cowl that hid their face. It was as if everything in the cowl was pure darkness, even my eyes combined with the magical aspect of Shadow being completely unable to see through it.

With black leather armor befitting some kind of master rouge or assassin, the figure looked positively deadly and mysterious.

"You dare fight in the streets of Ebongrave?" The hooded figure suddenly spoke in a melodic voice, looking towards the lizardman. "Have you lost your mind Seth'rek?"

Reeling back with a hiss, the lizardmen all took unconscious steps backward, the wolfkin doing to same as if their tails had been tucked behind their legs.

"Executrix Lana..." Seth'rek muttered, his forked tongue slipping out to worried lick the air.