

# CHAPTER 141: THE HEALING SPRING

“My *hero*,” Sam said, looking up starry-eyed into Kai’s now grumpy face.

“I could drop you off the edge,” he told Sam.

“Yes, you *could*. But then you’d have to pray *really hard* that I actually died. And there’s a damn good chance if those monsters didn’t kill me, a little drop wouldn’t either.”

“I’ll stab you, Kai, if you even dare,” Raiko threatened from somewhere behind. She seemed to be especially prickly after waking up.

The big Hawaiian turned to call over his shoulder, “It was only a joke!”

“A hilarious one,” Sam assured him.

“Seriously though,” Kai said. “How are you feeling? Can you really not move?”

“Not much,” Sam admitted. “It’s hard to describe, but it feels like my body decided to cut my brain off because it was being too reckless. Maybe once it’s healed up, it’ll decide to give control back, but until that point, I’m pretty much like this.”

“You are not... paralyzed?”

“Nah. I can feel everything, which is really quite unfortunate because every inch of my body is currently filing a backlog of complaints and grievances.”

Komachi licked his face excessively. Was she grooming him? It was hard to tell.

Chompers nipped at Kai's heels, scuttling about here and there while the rest of the group hurried on through the Aker Academy. Sam tried to crane his neck—one of the few parts he could move—to watch Chompers navigating the stairs.

That was always a treat, watching the dozens of chunky and fluffy corgi paws dance and prance along a series of stairs.

“Am I being herded?” Kai asked.

“Think of it as being guarded,” Sam told him, turning his attention back to the path they were taking. “Though whether he's guarding Komachi or me, I'm not quite sure. It's a complex hierarchy, I'm sure.”

“Good dog,” Raiko said fondly to the mimic. Sam could hear her patting his wooden lid. Not too long ago, Raiko had been incredibly wary of Chompers, but his loyal nature had clearly won her over.

Back on Raiko's homeworld of Islegard, mimics were notoriously dangerous and powerful monsters. Thanks to Komachi, Chompers had turned out different.

“Komachi on top of the hierarchy,” his cat said with a Cheshire-like grin.

“Of course,” Sam told her without missing a beat.

“You're very heavy,” Kai said as they passed a series of spinning, razor-sharp tiles that rose up from the floor as soon as they headed into the next room.

The professor waved a hand, and the tiles slowed and sank back to the ground.

“Question is... is Sam heavier, or is the armor heavier?” Komachi asked.

“I’m sure Raiko knows,” Matt said glumly.

“Why would I know that?” Raiko asked, oblivious to the suggestion, much to Sam’s relief. “Wait, are you slightly more... undead?”

“Why yes, thank you for noticing my delicate, ashen complexion. Ascending to Copper Rank was quite good for my necram lifestate.”

“Hm, any bits fall off yet?”

Her bluntness put Matt into a coughing fit.

Kai looked over. “I do not have a small amount of Strength, courtesy of Shaman being somewhat physically oriented, and of course I put quite a few points into Strength when I was a Cleric and out in the wilds. And yet, Sam is incredibly heavy to me.”

“I actually have a fair bit of Strength now,” Matt said, “owing to the crazy levels in Poisonmind. Give him here.”

“He is Hawaiian,” Kai said without looking at Matt. “I will bear this burden.”

Sam felt his heart seize, and despite everything, his eyes misted a little. He had never heard such kindness or tenderness from another Hawaiian, and in all his life, he had never felt so accepted.

It was as if all those years being bullied and taunted came back, and now he was accepted rather than shunned. Loved, not hated, simply for what he was born as. Something he could not change.

He didn’t *want* to like it, but it was difficult to not care about acceptance when all your life was filled with disappointment and rejection.

*Too bad it took the destruction of Hawai’i,* Sam thought bitterly.

His cynicism came back to save the day, because he doubted rather sharply that Kai would have said that if they were still on Earth and nothing had changed. No apocalypse, no shattering of the worlds.

Sam would still be a *haole*.

But here and now were real, and Earth was *gone*. Changed and refurbished into something different that nobody could really fully comprehend anymore.

And so, Sam allowed himself a little glow of pride, a little basking of acceptance, before he turned to matters more important.

Notifications.

While the conversation drifted around him, there wasn't much for him to contribute. And since he couldn't move, he might as well go through his notifications and see what was what.

After all, there wasn't much else to do, was there?

**You defeat the [Dungeon Core (Boss) (Level 33 - Copper)].**

**You gain immense Experience for slaying a Very Tough boss monster.**

**Dungeon Completed: Aker Academy**

**You gain the following:**

**(1) [Dungeon Weapon Coffers (Copper Grade)]**

**(1) [Dungeon Armor Coffers (Copper Grade)]**

**(1) [Dungeon Accessory Coffers (Copper Grade)]**

**(1) [Wildcard Ascension Gems (Profession)]**

**You gain incredible Experience for completing the Aker Academy Dungeon!**

**Hidden Quest Completed: Home is Where the Heart is**

*Despite the risks involved, you took Lenal back to her cherished home and freed it from the clutches of a newly born Dungeon Core. Not only have you gained the loyalty and trust of an elf Academic who is the last of her kind, through Raiko's timely use of her [Spirit Lantern], you have also managed to save the spirits of the fallen professors and faculty that yet lingered.*

You gain the following:

[Aker Academy Skyshard]

[Mana Engine Mk.1]

**Achievement Earned: Possession is Nine Tenths of the Law**  
*Being possessed, while certainly uncomfortable, does have its perks. Possessed by a Master Blacksmith, you have gained a glimpse into the world of what blacksmithing really means as seen through the eyes and guided by the hands of a Master.*

You gain the following:

Enhanced Smithing-based Experience gain.

+25% Smithing Profession stats per level.

Ability to select First Order Profession, Blacksmith.

**Achievement Earned: Unstoppable**

*You don't really know when to quit. It remains to be seen whether that's because of a learning disability, or because you're functionally insane when it comes to combat. But it has become clear that your willingness to push the envelope is second-to-none. Healers would make a mint off you, if you didn't already have one in your pocket and another who views you as a King.*

You gain the following:

[Unstoppable] Incarnate Trait.

+15 Strength

+25 Vigor

[Unstoppable]

(Incarnate Trait) (F-Class)

(★★ Unusual)

*You have taken the unwillingness to fall to your enemies to the extreme. Whenever you take a large amount of damage, you will enter [Unstoppable] wherein most attempts to kill, restrain, or control you will be significantly diminished. The duration of [Unstoppable] is directly related to the amount of damage you took for the trait to activate.*

The rewards were a lot to unpack. He wasn't opening any of that loot just yet, not in the state he currently was in.

With the way his hands were at the moment, somebody else would have to do it for him, anyway.

Sam felt pulled everywhere at once.

There were so many shiny new things to look at. He wasn't sure what he was more enthused by. Finally getting access to a Profession, with hugely beneficial amplified stats and Experience gain, or the juicy [Unstoppable] Trait.

It practically guaranteed it would trigger with the whopping 25 Vigor it gave him, making sure that even when he took high damage, he would still be able to survive it easily without dipping his HP down too low.

All of which were gained through achievements. He didn't even know it was possible to unlock a trait through an achievement. So far, they had only granted stats.

Not that getting more stats was ever a bad thing. If he didn't have over 100 Strength, Sam wouldn't even be able to lift his [Dullahan Greatsword].

Not that he could at present, but the point still stood.

The Unstoppable achievement granted a heap of Strength and Vigor along with the Incarnate Trait. Perhaps that was one of the reasons the rarity was so high. Unusual was exactly that, unusual to attain immediately.

Most of his skills were just Common rarity.

Though maybe not anymore. Sam hadn't gotten to those notifications yet. He knew there were a hefty amount of skill ups and level ups in there. Sam could feel them lurking just out of sight.

He moved on through the Shardscript, eager to see what awaited him next. He had the strong impression that completing the Dungeon imparted much more Experience than those Gargoyle bosses gave.

So how many level ups did he get?

The result was staggering. The level ups just kept pouring in. More than Sam ever gained in one sitting, for sure.

"So many," he wheezed.

He basked in the rush of amassing so many stats at once. And there was a whole feast of bonus points to apply too.

Unfortunately, it wasn't nearly enough—or so he assumed—to hit the next Rank and so he remained injured and sore from the hairs on top of his head to the soles of his feet.

Ranking up would have fully healed him. Considering his Swordsman Job hit Copper Rank at level 20, he wasn't sure when the next rank up would be.

It was possible that the next one would be at level 40, but there was no guarantee that was the case. He doubted any of the spirits from Aker Academy knew, though he'd still ask later.

Not using their knowledge as a tool would be a rookie mistake.

Sam skimmed past the majority of the level ups, focusing on the last few just to stop his eyes from straining at the countless scrolling numbers and notifications.

**Level Up!**

**Your [Void] Path has reached Level 30.**

**+2 Insight Talents | +1 Strength Talent**

**+2 Arcane Talents | +1 Vigor Talent**

**+1 Control Talent**

**Level Up!**

**Your [Swordsman] Job has reached Level 30.**

**+6 Strength | +6 Vigor | +3 Agility**

**+3 Dexterity**

**+2 Bonus Points**

**You have [Swordsman] abilities to select from.**

**Level Up!**

**Your [Voidknight] Legend has reached Level 20.**



**+2 to all Stats**

**+1 to all Talents**

Sam struggled with the inundation of stats and levels, and he hadn't even gotten to the huge amount of skill ups yet.

That was a total of 4 Swordsman levels and 5 Void levels, putting him at a grand total of 9 levels if you discounted Voidknight's 3 levels.

Which Sam didn't include because Voidknight did not level up on its own.

As a Legend, Voidknight increased every 3 levels Sam received in either his Job, Path, or Profession. Now that he had access to Blacksmith, he could easily increase his Voidknight levels, which gave a bonkers amount of stats and Talents.

With each level getting harder to acquire after the next, starting a new level 0 Profession was going to be easy to level up. Or so he hoped. The first 10 should be simple enough and he had more than enough materials to work with if he was going to take the Blacksmithing Profession.

Sam was grinning ear to ear by the time they made it back to Raiko's Sacred Tree and the healing spring at its base.

His HP had skyrocketed with the additional Vigor from levels and Talents. He had thought it high at its previous high of 3,890. Now it was an utterly massive 6,349.

And he was sitting at 12 HP.

Sam hissed gently as the healing springs of the Sacred Tree began to do their work, and what a job they had in front of them. Well over 6,000 HP to heal.

The runes that powered the healing pool began to wink out one after the other, and Sam felt a little guilty about hogging so much of the Sacred Tree's power.

*Just how long am I going to have to sit in here?* Sam thought as his HP slowly, but surely, began to tick up faster and faster before hitting a metaphorical wall.

*A long time*, he thought a little while later as his HP just crested 100. He hardly felt any different, and he guessed that maybe having a hilariously large HP wasn't always the *best* thing in the world.