

Chapter 2.59 Split Treasure

Sally and Archie scattered as sharp claws from the beast descended downward, scoring deep grooves into the stone brickwork.

“What? Is that like an Owlb-“

“It’s an Eaglebear!” Archie yelled from wherever he had snuck himself. Being so small, he had the advantage of sliding in the gaps between the mountainous stacks of containers and troves.

Now that she had some distance on it, she could see now that the black feathers rescinded to a gray-brown down the creature's body. A large body, much like that of a bear, with four legs ending in sharp talons instead of wings. The plume around the Eaglebear’s neck bristle as it peered around for the smaller prey.

It looked neither undead, nor willing to discuss matters. Shame it had to end this way, but maybe it would have nicer brains than everything else here? Dungeons seemed to be the worst place for cuisine - and once she had less danger glaring at her from across the room, she would muse on why that would be.

She stumbled across one of the chests, slipping and bouncing down a couple of them, closer to the Monster. That door needed to be opened. Her eyes scanned it for a level or switch, as the Eaglebear turned towards her and readied a pounce.

[Mortis Bomb] careened over the space, leaving a trail of green as the skull struck the open switch - not bringing forth any undead, but opening the door for the other three.

The Monster landed on her just after, crushing her through the chests she was standing upon and spilling their contents down to the next layer. As it raised a claw up to stomp atop her, she thrust her dagger into the gnarled foot, piercing through the center.

Her shadow slashed out at the other foot being used as balance, and the Eaglebear reared up to back away from the surprise pain. Humphrey barreled into it, knocking it down a few layers to collapse through another handful of chests. Sally grinned. That seemed like a quicker way of opening them.

The creature rose and took a step back to avoid the downswing of the greatsword. The Death Knight twisted it to the flat side to block a swipe of the large claws, the metal screaming out from the strike. He blazed red and gray light as his abilities shot into action. From behind the Eaglebear a giant spider burst out from amongst some storage boxes, bright ginger in color and glaring at the Monster from eight emerald eyes.

Edward mostly stayed near the back, although his weapon was glowing orange.

In seeing that it was now surrounded, the Eaglebear opened its beak wide and screamed - the piercing howl almost bringing a wind with it that buffeted the Party.

The light above the middle of the room became shadowed, and Sally looked up to see a large figure drop through the illuminated opening to land atop the golden chest beneath large brown wings.

“This one has a bear's head and eagle body,” she yelled at the ginger spider with a shrug. “What’s this?”

“Still an Eaglebear,” the responding hiss came.

Totally ridiculous. They were nothing alike, and would their babies have a chance to make a whole bear or whole eagle? Well, *these two* wouldn't, because she was about to kill them, but...

She idly tapped her hand on a withdrawn skull. It was almost time, and as much as she wanted to charge into the melee, she needed to be a bit smarter and use her new advantages. The bird creature turned and leaped towards Archie, who retreated to clamber up the wall. Humphrey had the attention of the bear version.

“Go help Humps,” she told her shadow. Lucius popped up beside her with a thumbs up bubble, hopped down a couple of rows of treasure chests, then vanished into smoke.

She flung her skull attack across the room to strike the winged Monster in the back, the small explosion burning away at some of the feathers. Four zombies rose from the floor and started to grab towards the bipedal legs. It was enough of a distraction to stop the cat-spider from getting munched by the large maw of the bear's head.

Archie leaped from the wall onto his assailant, skittering around as he drew a length of web from the wall, down over its back and wings. It struggled to move away at the same time as kicking the zombies away - one unlucky corpse getting half stomped by the large talons in the process.

Humphrey buckled under his sword, holding it horizontally as his Eaglebear tried to stomp down on him. His shadow sliced out at the back legs, gashing just above the feet of both limbs. The creature was confused and tried to dart its white eyes around to see who had attacked it. Five skeletons rose up around Humphrey as he darted forward with a slash of his own, catching the bucking animal across the feathered chest.

Sally watched as Edward slowly sauntered across the battlefield, easily stepping up the layers of wide steps with his long legs. He was still keeping a good distance, but was starting to flank both enemies. She held out a hand and cast [Living Dead] to regenerate and empower her undead friends.

The winged creature burst into the air as Archie dropped to the floor. One zombie was dead, but three had managed to do a little damage. She commanded them to go assist Humphrey, as their prey was now getting itself stuck in the thick webbing the spider had weaved, preventing it from flying away.

She knew a tasty treat when she saw one. Flipping her dagger around in her hand, she began to hop between containers towards the flank of the battle. Edward jumped from his position opposite, striking the bear creature in the back as he used the monster as a

stepping stone to jump over to where Sally was. Purple energy began to crack and course across the Eaglebear.

“Nice of you to participate,” she grinned at him as he followed on behind her.

“Larger Monsters aren’t really my thing, and it looked like Humphrey already had a shadow.”

“So you came to assist me?” Sally slid to a stop on a long container and looked up at the struggling flying monster.

“No, I just want first dibs on your loot if you die.”

“Hah! If I die then you will be fu-“ They both leaped away as the creature dropped from the sky, crushing the boxes where they had stood into shards.

Sally leaped atop the creature, grabbing at its feathers as it floundered about on the floor. Her dagger rose into the air as she aimed to plunge it into where she assume a heart might be. Blue illuminated her face as the bear-mouth opened wide and a large orb of light began to form.

She was blinded and fell from her perching spot, bouncing on the stone floor covered in debris before rolling to her feet. With her right eye she could see Archie wrapping the taloned feet together, and Edward may have stabbed the creature. [Living Dead] bloomed up around her and vision came back to her left eye. Pain and then a soothing feeling radiated on that side of her face.

With a growl, she stomped on the outstretched wing, stabbing her dagger into the ground to pin it there, then she walked her way across it to the panicked beast. It roared at her and she grabbed its muzzle and held it shut. “Bad!”

[Eat Brains]

She rose from the creature, feeling slightly satiated by the meal. Not great, not terrible. It tasted like warm eggs, which was somewhat concerning. Humphrey and Lucius had just finished off the other too, in part thanks to the harrying zombies - of which one still remained.

Oh! She would need to get little hats for them. If they persisted through her summoning of them, they she could pick out the best performers and grow attached to them, mourn them when they fell. If only they weren’t stuck in a pyramid.

Lucius popped back into being beside the Death Knight. “Wow, that was a lot of fun. Your sword is huge!” A little firework emoji popped beside his head.

“Thanks,” Humphrey deflated. “It fulfills a purpose.”

Sally stretched out as Archie shrunk down into a normal cat form. Edward walked around the corpse to tilt his head toward her.

“Feeling okay?”

“Sure, a little rough, but what's new?” She yawned and looked around at the carnage. Looting everything would take forever... but what if it was some elaborate trap? Like that one movie with the thing. They should take nothing... or maybe just the sparkling gold chest? It was the centerpiece, after all.

“Its just that...” Edward drew a little closer. “You took a lot of damage from that beam.”

She squinted down at the nearest shiny object, trying to get a glint of her reflection. The left side of her face looked pretty raw and discolored, and it had burned away some of her hair, but otherwise she was intact.

“Nah, I'm fine. Let's gather up and argue over what we should do about the loot?”

Edward shrugged and then stumbled away as the Eaglebear lurched. Sword drawn, he stepped back as the creature rose to his feet - behind him the bear-form one did the same.

[Endless Sleep]

Sally beamed as they vanished from view, alongside the zombie who needed a crown.

“See, that's how we take over the world.”