

Chapter 2.22 Some Actual Loot

"I don't appreciate your tone, Sir," Sally whispered back at the vampire.

Theo seemed to close his eyes at the admonishment but wasn't falling asleep even if he looked half dead. Or half undead - which he was. Instead, he just stayed slumped against the wall, and his tongue lolled out of his mouth.

Well, if she couldn't sleep, then she had other things she could be doing. Quietly she sat up and stretched out her arms. Things like sifting through all that loot that she managed to fit in her Inventory. Mostly, she was thankful that there were no encumbrance rules - or at least she was strong enough to where it might not come into effect yet.

"If you are up, I will rest now," Humphrey said in a hushed tone, not moving from his position.

"Go for it," she whispered back, causing Lucius to startle. The demon made the show of definitely being awake, despite his crimson eyes being half closed.

She rotated through her STAR and thought she should at least update Chuck on them not dying. More than they already were. Not since the incident, she smiled to herself.

[Sally: we are okay.]

[Sally: heading to pyramids 2moro]

[Sally: theo is_]

She scrunched up her face as she looked at the mess of a man. It would be a stretch to say that he was okay, but he wasn't also trying to tear their faces off, so...

[Sally: theo is unwell but stable]

Until he regained his Stamina, he shouldn't be a problem - although it was odd it was taking so long. Perhaps part of the curse made recovery slower. She exhaled through her nose and switched around to the Inventory.

Masses of daggers, swords, and whatever else grossed her out. All those numbers of stacked boring weapons - but at least she got a sizeable boost to her Skull collection. She almost gagged at the thought of opening all the Chance Boxes too. There were three things that were marginally interesting now that she had some time to look over them. Finger in the air, she rearranged them so they were beside each other in the Inventory grid.

[Lower Demon Card (14)]

[Crimson Treasure Box (6)]

[Demonkiller Blade (1)]

She had more keys than treasure boxes, which seemed like a bit of a scam. Normally if there were actual Players around, she imagined she would be able to sell the spares to those who couldn't delve into the Hells themselves for whatever reason. Or just had bad luck.

The Cards didn't seem too useful - only giving a fire damage bonus. She didn't deal any fire damage - aside from her witty burns. Her face wrinkled up in not being able to level that brag at any of her Party members. The set bonus for five of the Cards gave fire resistance or something

- but she was pretty tied to using the [Cyclops Card]. And not just because the picture on it was cute.

Saving the chests for last, she then brought up the information for the blade.

[Demonkiller Blade]
[Rare Sword - Requires Reputation with {Eternal Sun} to wield.]

That brought rise to more questions than it answered. A rare sword might be better than the baseball bat, but she had no idea who the Eternal Sun was. Options included something to do with the dragon due to the current malady ailing the Wastelands, a specific guild, or perhaps a System-created faction that was either dead or they had not met yet.

Either way, that just meant the blade would be taking up a slot in her Inventory and be no more useful than the stacks of clubs or normal swords. Briefly, she considered discarding all the trash, but then realized how bizarre it would be to start dropping hundreds of weapons. And then she wondered if there was any combat advantage to doing so.

With nothing interesting left to prod at, she turned her attention to the [Crimson Treasure Box]es. Rather than bringing the large chests out into real space, she was briefly amused to see that she could open them from inside the Inventory - saving the necessary hassle of Box animation and having to hold and store the retrieved item. That would have been nicer to know at the start.

[Item will bind to you once opened.]
[Accept? Yes/No]

Yes, she thought as she pressed the Yes button. There couldn't be anything terrible in them that the items being bound would be a problem. Although, in saying that, a dozen ideas for cursed items popped into her brain. Sucks that she was getting all the loot for herself, but that's what the rest of them got for being asleep.

[Open All?]

Even more useful - she didn't have to do it one at a time. Something in the back of her head tried to convince her to properly learn more about the System that she found herself stuck in. But that was also Theo's thing. At once, she used six keys to open the chests.

[Crimson Dawn Helm]
[Crimson Dawn Chest Armour]
[Crimson Dawn Leggings]
[Crimson Dawn Boots]
[Crimson Dawn Bracers]
[Crimson Dawn Shoulder Pads]

She puckered her lips as she looked at the new icons in her Equipment Inventory. Despite all the growth she had achieved over the last area, she was still unable to see the basic stats on things. This armor set must be an upgrade, though. Either through luck or design, she received no duplicate pieces - but then that did make sense if they were bound to her. It must be a coincidence that she found six chests, and the set had six parts too. Either that or the System had someone more competent at the helm.

Actually, that was another question for the gang in the morning. Silently, she yawned. Looking at items always sapped away her strength. Maybe if she just rested her eyes for a minute, she'd feel a little better.

"Edward?"

The demon stopped as he passed the open doorway and deflated.

"Yes, High Master?" He slowly stepped backward into view of the illuminated room.

The robed figure ran their fingers slowly down the page of a large tome - more to feel the texture rather than to find a spot to read from. "Rubens would like to see you."

Edward grimaced. "Of course, I had a feeling that would be-

"Inevitable?"

"-on the agenda soon." The demon gave a low bow and then carried on back down the passageway. Exhaling half the way, he eventually stopped at a pair of wide double doors. The sand-colored brickwork around their burgundy was engraved with various symbols he didn't much care for. It was magical but did nothing to him - good or bad.

Eye twitching, he gave the smooth wood a knock.

"*Enter*," a deep voice vibrated through the floor and into his bones.

Two doors parted to reveal a large chamber, wide and with a tall peaked ceiling. Everything was the color of sandstone or rust. Very drab, Edward thought - although he daren't say it in anything louder than a whisper within his head.

The reason for the large room sat before him, shrouded in darkness due to the almost total absence of lighting. Two large eyes of amber watching him enter, and the shifting shape as large as a house rose and fell with large breaths.

"You return empty-handed again, Edward." Even the weight of the words from the dragon felt like it could crush his bones.

"Yes, Sire. A new Party has entered the Wastes, and they are... stubborn." He bowed as low as he was able. It wasn't required, but it seemed the smart thing to do when you were liable to be eaten - more than once.

"Scribe tells me you have lost a Golem to this Party."

Edward's right eye twitched again. "Not lost, but they saw fit to-

"To kill you, yes. You must be smart enough to know that such a thing would be... inevitable."

"Sire." The demon winced. "So too is the acquisition of their tithe."

“See that it is so, Edward. I would hate to be disappointed... when we are so close.” The creature lumbered forward slightly towards the demon, the brief lighting illuminating sandy-yellow scales and large leathery wings. “Take someone more convincing than the Golem this time.”

“Sally.” Humphrey shook the zombie.

“Hmfs?” Her eyes opened blearily, part of her jacket in her mouth. “What, oh, is it my turn for...” Sunlight illuminated the hall from the side windows. “Ah.”

The Death Knight stood up straight and gestured with his head.

Theo was not where he had been. She blinked to make sure it wasn't some trick of the light. “System damn it,” she scowled. Where has he gotten to?

“Not very far,” Archie called from the slightly ajar front door. “He is trying to run away in the way that a worm does. *Wriggling.*”

Sally stood up to her feet and stretched. The sleep was not great - in fact, it was terrible, and she felt just as grumpy as yesterday morning. Then again, it had been a while since she had eaten some Player brains. They seemed to be a rare commodity this side of the sandstorm.

She walked across the hall to the doorway, almost tripping over the cat, and glared down the road. There the vampire lay, trying to move his legs and then torso in a fluid motion to push himself along the road. A trail of dark crimson gave his travel away due to the dried blood from the Hell fight rubbing off on the cobbled road.

“He has been singing something about being a maniac and dancing,” Humphrey shrugged as he moved up behind her. “There is a determination for something, but I do not know what.”

“If it's to kill someone, then I guess we are lucky he moved further away from us,” she shrugged. “Weren't you meant to be watching with me, Arch?”

“Probably,” the cat looked up at them with emerald eyes. “But I didn't”

“Clearly.”

She turned to see Lucius still asleep. How anyone could sleep through the rest of them stomping around, she didn't know. A job half done and fully remembered, she brought up her Inventory and equipped the new armor set beneath her casual clothing.

It felt... pretty good, actually. It was slightly heavier, and it reduced some movements, but it definitely had more *armor* to it.

Humphrey narrowed his eye sockets. “What did you just do?”

“New armor, why?”

“That is not meant for *you*,” the flames behind his helmet rose higher.