

Chapter -83

It was incredibly-dark where I ended up, though in the distance I saw a single faint spotlight hit what looked like a stage. The room I was in was enormous, with seemingly forty feet to the ceiling, if not more, though it was hard to tell.

Then my ‘Transition Lenses’ Passive kicked in and I saw my surroundings cast in dark-grey shadows with slightly-lighter tones drawing out the contours of everything.

I was standing near the back of the seating area in the middle of a large theatre hall, with something like forty rows stretching out in front of me. Directly behind and above me was a raised seating area with about eight rows, and on the sides of the large theatre hall were the VIP seats in raised ‘booths’. The stage had a wooden floor and there were large red curtains draping down from the ceiling obscuring its sides, as well as a small pit directly in front of it for the orchestra.

But there were no performers on stage nor any musicians in the pit. However, an audience, so to speak, was in attendance.

Around me, in the various sections of the theatre were other Players. All of them standing stock-still and wearing panicked expressions. None of them seemed like they could see me very well, but they were looking in my direction, maybe because they’d heard me arrive.

I scanned the faces. None of them looked like Bee or Logan.

“I wonder why everyone is standing still like that, all quiet like?” Panda said.

“Bee!? Where are you?” I yelled, my voice echoing through the entire theatre.

Every nearby Player twitched at the sound, and one even looked directly at me and raised a finger in front of his mouth.

“I think they want you to be quiet,” Panda interpreted.

“Why are you all acting so weird?” I asked the guy.

Instead of replying, he started very slowly backing away.

Just then a shadow fell from behind one of the tall curtains and landed on the stage with a loud *thud*, just on the fringe of the dim spotlight. Its large wet nose sniffled the air with great big huffs.

“Is that a bat?” I asked.

Immediately, two parasol-sized flappy ears stiffened behind its round head and it looked directly at me with its eyeless face.

SHRIEK!!

The enormous bat leapt from the stage with a single flap of its leathery wings, aiming its clawed feet at my chest.

I dodgerolled forward, just in time for it to pass through me and flatten the nearby seats. As its back was turned to me, I spun around and moved towards it with a powerful hook.

“*Eat shit!!*” Brock squealed.

My purple balloon gauntlet passed right through the bat, as though it was made of shadow, and the monster immediately turned around and dug its right claw into my Carapace Suit’s chestplate. With a powerful kick, it tossed me high into the air, then leapt from the ground with a single beat of its massive wings, before catching me in its feet and crashing me into six of the seats nearer to the stage with enough power to knock all the air out of me and cratering the floor. Its weight bore down on me as its feet stepped on my back.

“Don’t make a sound!” Panda urged and I obliged him, although mainly because I couldn’t really do anything else.

“You’ve lost about 20% of your health. Well, more like 21.098% to be precise.”

With a thought I brought up my current health points:

<p>Gambit’s Condition Health: Non-Goodn’t / Isn’t it Great? Mana: !eM HcJpao?</p>
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“Not sure what you expected from that,” Panda commented.

I tried to blink in Morse code to ask him an important question. He didn’t even look, but seemed to read my thoughts, as he said, “Don’t worry, Lordie is fine. He’s chilling on your head still.”

After a long minute, the bat eased off the pressure on my back and returned to the stage with a beat of its wings, perhaps thinking I was dead. With its weight gone, I allowed myself a deep breath.

Although it was probably a bad idea, I eased myself back onto my feet and quickly pulled my Looking Glass out of my inventory to appraise the monster that’d just suplexed me.

Level 9	‘Louie the Laggard’	Boss <small>x</small>
<i>“SHRIEK!!”</i>		

When Demons keep pets, they always grow to have the same bad habits as their owners. Well, it just so happens that Louie, a Dwarf Nightwing, was raised by Gloom, a Squire-Lord of Perpetual Procrastination. Gloom, being a Sloth Demon, reacted poorly to anyone trying to disturb him in his nest and therefore taught his little Nightwing to aggressively attack anyone uninvited.

Gloom was eaten by his big brother during a two-hundred-year-long slumber party and thus his pet, Louie, was auctioned off to the GREAT GAME. When we find creatures with interesting gimmicks, we usually employ our Creature Cloning Department to make use of them in as many places as possible, though we tend to keep just one clone per Region, so as to not overdo it.

Anyway.

Nightwings are interesting creatures. They cannot be harmed or even touched while immersed in darkness, though they can interact with the world normally enough. This makes them quite tricky to fight. Which is our way of letting you know that the objective of this Dungeon isn't to win this fight normally.

“I think the gimmick is the light!” Panda said, pointing to the stage.

Getting there wouldn't be easy though.

Wind brushed my hair, while I was watching the enormous bat retreat back behind the large curtains, and I turned around instinctively, just in time to see Bee floating down from one of the VIP seats high above.

“You okay?” she mouthed wordlessly, after alighting gently atop the backrest of a seat in front of me.

“Big bat, no hit,” I mouthed.

“You don't need to smack your lips like that,” Panda told me. “Also, why did you go caveman?”

“See Logan?”

She shook her head.

I looked around us and started to count Players.

There were only five of them and none of the five were Logan. The Sneak-Peek I'd done before entering had stated six, which meant that the Heroic Savior was hiding somewhere, potentially in a spot where he could pick off the Players that entered.

“How are you able to see in the dark?” Panda asked Bee.

“Because I’m a moth,” she replied, and it was hard to argue with that. I guessed it didn’t show up as a Passive, since she was quite literally transformed into a different kind of creature and thus all the effects were inherent within that. Just like how becoming a Beetle hadn’t given her a Passive called ‘exoskeleton’, but it’d just been there as part of the transformation.

“There are a few dead Players in the raised seating area in the back, as well as in the upper VIP sections. Those in the back seem to have been crushed by Louie, while the others were killed with some kind of rotting sickness. I arrived right next to someone who looked like they’d melted from the inside out.”

“Your mouthing, good,” I said, surprised I was even able to get all of that from just watching her lips move.

“Maybe he’s hiding in one of the VIP booths,” Panda guessed. “Unless there’s hallways to hide in?”

Bee shook her head. “No hallways or backstage areas that I could see.”

I began scanning the upper booths that looked down on all the other seats and the stage. The moment I spotted some movement, a nearby Player began screaming, which caused the bat to drop down from the curtain again.

The guy had been hit with some kind of crystal dart in the neck and it was pumping a vile-looking green-glowing poison into him, which lit up his veins as it filtered through his body. Just like Bee had described, the guy started melting from within, which was quite a horrible way to go. Sort of like a human candle, but instead of candlewax dripping everywhere, it was liquified *everything*, even bones, if I was seeing correctly.

Perhaps realizing they were sitting ducks, and capitalizing on the noise made by the melting Player, everyone else began to move towards the edges of the rows of seats to give themselves some cover. Though obviously none of them could see in the dark, but it also seemed that the Dart-Sniper, Logan if I had to guess, was unable to see clearly.

SHRIEK!!

A loud crunchy *thud* sounded as the Nightwing bat landed on the melting Player and pulverized the remains of his body.

I pointed up towards where I’d seen the movement, but before I could mouth the words ‘Let’s go!’, a can of beans flew through the air, catching our attention.

Looking at the can turned out to be a bad decision, as it suddenly erupted with the glare of a thousand suns.

—Patreon-exclusive Copy—
—Kristoffer Pauly (aka “Dosei”)—

WARNING!

You have been blinded and cannot see!

Time remaining:

$$2(X - 4)(9 + X) - X^2 = 4X$$