

## Chapter 23 Warmage

A quick thrust of his spear killed the last soldier on the ground floor, Adrian stepping into the barracks. He focused on the few side rooms, finding another two soldiers he quickly dispatched, the monsters not having noticed him yet. *Don't look for anything yet. Keep clearing.*

He sneaked to the large entrance and spied through the slightly murky windows. Outside he saw the groups of soldiers and dogs he had seen from atop the wall beforehand. They didn't move overly much, patrolling endlessly within their fenced area.

Adrian thought it unwise to go out and fight the creatures without a plan coupled with his injuries. Plus he had just ingested two potions, their effects only somewhat known to him. They could've aged or could have side effects simply known by the people who usually used them, but not to him.

Someone who got drunk for the first time or received strong pain meds would be surprised by the side effects, even if they had been informed beforehand.

He went to the upper floor and continued checking rooms for undead. In the third room, his vision blurred. Adrian stumbled to the side, stabilizing himself on a nearby wall before he retched.

A splatter of blood hit the ground, his vision blurring even more as his focus waned. *Not good. Might pass out,* he thought and slid along the wall, just barely managing to shut the door before he collapsed. His own body would be in the way. A suitable fortification.

Adrian felt his body churn, the last thing he did was forcing his body to turn to the side before he passed out.

He woke with a start, not naked and near the white tree but still in the barracks room he had stumbled into. An office like room he now saw, with a nice looking wooden desk and a chair of the same make behind. Shelves lined the back wall, books and trinkets resting within.

Adrian groaned, puke sticking to his chin. It hadn't dried yet, making the smell a little less nauseating than it could've been. Not that anything in this castle town smelled pleasant in the first place. *Should raid a perfume shop if I get the opportunity,* he thought and slowly pulled himself up, trying not to get anymore puke onto his armor.

When he finally stood, Adrian felt his balance shift, his body hitting the door as he veered back. *Take it slow,* he thought and grabbed for his spear, the weapon used for some additional stability. *I should take a break, gather my strength.*

He moved over to the desk and sat down in the wooden chair, sighing as he closed his eyes, feeling the world turn. It didn't feel like being drunk exactly, more like the nausea after a long fever bout. *Don't overdo it with potions. Noted.*

His back remained sore, a reminder of the close fight he had survived likely a few hours prior. Mages were still bad news but he was glad the one he had found here didn't use fire. And now he knew how to deal with them whenever he had exhausted all his other options.

Adrian took his time sitting in the office, focusing on his breathing as he started to use the meditation technique Yrenor had shown him. The process calmed him down, let him focus on his

situation from a more objective perspective. *I did pretty fucking well today*, he concluded. Clearing out this main building had given him a secure spot in the area from which he could search the various buildings either belonging to the city guard or some kind of military branch. A place where he would surely find some good equipment and hopefully a few potions.

When he felt ready to move again, Adrian slowly stood up, still using his spear as a walking stick. He tapped the door a few times but heard no reaction from outside.

The hall looked the exact same way he had left it in, undead bodies lying on the ground where he had killed them.

He searched the creatures before he went outside through the back door, checking for undead.

“Not so powerful now, are we?” he murmured, crouching down near the mage.

***Chest – Faenhold Mage Robe [Rare]***

*Intelligence +5*

*Wind Magic Control +2%*

*Mana Shield +25%*

*That’s new... rare. And a mana shield? Is that the same thing the mage had before?*

He carefully removed the slightly damaged pieces of clothing, stripping the mage of everything except his undergarments.

***Legs – Faenhold Mage Pants [High]***

*Wisdom +4*

*Fire Resistance +1%*

***Hands – Faenhold Mage Gloves [High]***

*Wisdom +2*

*Magic Projectile Speed +1%*

***Belt – Leather Belt [Adequate]***

*Intelligence +2*

***Boots – Faenhold Mage Boots [High]***

*Wisdom +2*

*Fire Resistance +5%*

Adrian folded everything up and went back inside, putting it all on a large table. He wasn’t surprised about the quality of the gear, after what he had seen the mage do. It would prove incredibly useful for his training but he wasn’t done quite yet.

The ground floor of the large building didn’t offer much in terms of loot, but he quickly found the stairs leading down in to the cellar. Adrian lit his lamp and stepped down, occasionally tapping the walls with his spear to see if any undead were waiting for him in the darkness.

No moans or noises came from the dark tunnels. He found burnt out torches and plenty of storage rooms, most of them holding various crates or shelves. Adrian looked through the contents, finding most of it being food. Or well, it had been food at some point. Now it was either rotten or dried out.

A few crates held various nuts and seeds that had survived in the mostly dry environment. Some spices had survived too. A good supply somewhat close to the entrance he and Yrenor used.

The largest room in the cellar had a locked grated door, the key however still in the lock. *Not taking security seriously. Some things just never change, no matter where.*

Beyond he found the interesting stuff. Armors, weapons, robes, weird items he couldn't quite place, and plenty of crates. Some were already open, Adrian checking the contents with a smile on his face.

### ***Mana Potion [Adequate]***

There were fifteen in the crate and several more of the same sitting in the shelves. *Jackpot.*

The next several hours, Adrian spent looking and sorting through all the gear in the armory. Most of it he would leave behind, focusing on the best gear he could get to work on his glass magic. There were a few staves as well, granting Intelligence and other magic related bonuses but he knew his main focus had to remain the spear. Either that or his daggers.

For purely training related purposes, he still took the best one with him, adding to the large pack he now prepared on the ground floor. The military facility luckily offered massive backpacks of quality make as well. He left the conventional armor behind, deciding to focus on his new magic related gear.

With his pack ready, he left through the back door, leaving the rest of the loot and other barracks behind for now. He had plenty of new toys to play with after all.

The trip back was largely uneventful, Adrian mostly focused on not making too much noise. His mood took a bit of a damper when he left through the tower, seeing all the undead lying on the ground. All the cleanup would take days of work. *At least there are no stairs involved.*

Yrenor had added a few more bodies to the pyre, currently saying his prayers.

"... take these souls and lead them to the Veil, freed of their fear and anger. Blessed be thee, many eyed Neliarum," he finished with the usual phrase.

Adrian hadn't wanted to breach the subject of the many eyed one, a god of death as far as he understood. As long as Yrenor didn't complain about his random prayers uttered in English, he wouldn't bring it up.

"You were successful? Or did you die again?" Yrenor asked, still sitting.

"I was. Killed a mage, found mana potions, and some gear that should help," Adrian replied.

"You won against a combat mage?" Yrenor asked, standing up now before he stretched.

"Impressive. How did you do it?"

Adrian allowed himself a grin. "Glass bolt for my crossbow. And finally the dagger," he explained, showing the blade. He tried to twirl it in a cool way but fucked it up, nearly cutting himself in the finger.

The warrior ignored it. "Well done, Adrian. Maybe I underestimated you."

"Wait, you thought I would die?" he asked.

Yrenor smiled ever so slightly. "Not die, necessarily. Not that it would be a problem for you, chosen one. I thought you would return, knowing that you had a long time yet to train and improve. It seems that your advantages make up for a complete lack of discipline and innate ability."

“Gonna complain about my looks too?” Adrian asked, putting away his dagger as he smiled.

“Looks matter little in battle. Though you should stay away from settlements, that much is sure,” he said, his voice sounding completely serious.

“You old fucker,” Adrian said, readjusting his pack. “Should we head back or do you want to get more corpses?”

“Are you sure you don’t need to bring a few back yourself?” Yrenor asked, his eyes narrowing a little.

“Yeah, yeah. I’ll get to it tomorrow. My back isn’t perfectly healed and I still feel queasy from those potions,” Adrian said.

“You drank those old brews?” Yrenor asked, his eyes widening.

Adrian shrugged. “It was either death or those potions. It paid off in the end.”

The man shook his head as he stared at the ground. “Youth. Irrational and stupid. You shouldn’t take these risks, no matter what kind of magic was bestowed on you.”

“You said yourself that death is a good teacher,” he said and walked past the old man. “Besides, I didn’t die, did I? So let’s go. I’m hungry. Got some new spices to try as well.”

“Really?” Yrenor asked, his tone completely different.

Well, it wasn’t really. He sounded pretty much the same, but Adrian could hear some of the slight differences by now. He knew that Yrenor was a stoic old warrior, one who had likely been some kind of officer or teacher at one point in his life. His humor mixed near seamlessly with the downright predatory presence he sometimes showed. Adrian still didn’t know when the old man was just being incredibly sarcastic and when he was dead serious. At this point he just didn’t care much anymore, and Yrenor had yet to kill him. Even once.

Adrian had the theory that his cooking alone kept him the sleep and training spot. All that talk about him being some kind of chosen one, he was pretty sure the man was just mocking him. Mostly. Or he was just mocking his lack of ability. The growth he showed spoke for itself after all, Adrian already able to hold his own against undead monsters. He remained cautiously optimistic in regards to all that, not having a way to compare himself to other humans in Olsdaat.

“Any idea if there’s a limit to mana potions I should drink? I’ll start using them tomorrow,” Adrian said as he smelled on the new spices. *Smells a bit like turmeric, just red instead of yellow.*

He didn’t expect an answer from the old warrior smoking his pipe, his eyes on the fires as he reminisced about the past. Or he had brain damage, which was Adrian’s leading theory. It couldn’t be that Yrenor was just an asshole. Unthinkable.

“Just try. You will either survive or you will die,” he said.

*Classic.*

The answer had come in regards to many of his questions. By now Adrian didn’t regret sharing his special power because it endangered him or made him stand out, he regretted it because Yrenor seemed to care even less about his well being, suggesting to just try things out and learn himself.

“Experience is the best teacher,” Adrian murmured.

“Are you mocking me?” Yrenor asked, his eyes turning his way.

“Yes. Well deducted,” Adrian said. “Don’t burn me, you’ll ruin the food.”

“Insolent brat. I would’ve had you whipped for that back in my day,” Yrenor said.

“I’m not some squire under your command, nor do I think I’m old enough to be called a brat,” Adrian answered without worry. Yrenor liked to throw out one or the other threat. But he assumed even the old general or whatever he once was didn’t want to sour his relations with the only reasonable cook in this godforsaken shit town.

“Brat is not a title given for age. It is given for behavior,” Yrenor lectured. “I have seen war mages near drown themselves with potions. Necessary, but there are dangers. Never were they driven to such actions without reason, though I don’t know if the side effects or the loss of resources were the crucial part in that decision.”

“Guess I’ll have to find out what kind of side effects those are,” Adrian said.

“I don’t think it will kill you, that much I will tell you. But it won’t be pleasant,” Yrenor said.

*There’s a wide range in what unpleasant can be. Guess I’ll start with one potion tomorrow, then two the next day. Until I find out if it’s a bad hangover or some kind of heavy radiation poisoning.*

“Did you fight in a war?” Adrian asked. He sometimes tried to find out more about his companion, when the conversation was flowing.

“The war doesn’t matter anymore,” Yrenor said.

“So it’s still ongoing?” Adrian asked. *War with the undead? Or did someone nuke Faenhold with some kind of biological magic weapon?*

Yrenor chuckled to himself. “You’re right. I don’t think it officially ended.”

“Why not?” Adrian asked.

“Because everyone is dead,” the man said, his voice much more quiet now, the tone entirely different.

Adrian knew when the conversation was over, instead focusing on his cooking for now. *Ancient Guardians, a war that hasn’t ended but is over all the same. And I’ve been summoned to be the chosen one. A chosen one without a quest.*

He let the soup cook and went to his pack, unpacking the gear he had found. He occasionally glanced at Yrenor but found the old man to be entirely focused on his flames.

### ***Chest – Faenhold Warmage Robes [High]***

*Wisdom +2*

*Fire Magic Damage +4*

*Only wish there was some equipment with glass magic damage.*

The warmage robes had worse bonuses than the mage robes he had taken off the wind mage he had killed. The difference was the armor itself. It had plated sections near the chest and stomach, metal lined into the dark gray fabric to protect a few vitals of the wearer. He still rather wanted the bonuses from his other robe, deciding to just wear both on top of each other. The fabric itself was quite thick but he figured a bit more defense were worth the additional weight.

**Arms – Faenhold Warmage Bracers [High]**

*Intelligence +4*

*Fire Magic Mana Cost -2%*

**2h Weapon – Faenhold Warmage Staff [High]**

*Wisdom +4*

*Magic Projectile Speed +3%*

The staff itself looked incredibly simple, treated dark brown wood with a twisted end at the top. Adrian figured he could use it for training or even in battle if he switched between the staff and his spear.

**Off Hand – Knight Shield [Adequate]**

*Strength +2*

He had his shield back. Not the exact same but it was close.

Standing behind the chair, Adrian quickly changed into his new attire, keeping on his knight shirt and underwear.

Some of the gear showed light damage and wear, definitely not in pristine condition but the same was true for most of his previous equipment. Adrian was glad that the city was infested with dried up undead and not bleeding zombies.

*Could've been the case back when this whole thing started. And now it's just been so long everything's dried up.*

"You almost look like a mage now," Yrenor said.

"Thanks," Adrian replied, sitting down to do some reading, glancing back at the pot to make sure it didn't boil over.

"Why two sets of robes? It will inhibit your movements," Yrenor said.

Adrian glanced at him. "First one gives better bonuses, the one on top is armored. I'd rather have a bit more defense, my technique is quite limited anyway."

"At least you're realistic," Yrenor said and got up from his chair, leaving to his rooms upstairs where it sounded like he was rummaging around.

When he returned, the man tossed a helmet into Adrian's lap.

"What's this?" he asked, looking at the well crafted piece of gear. The helmet had a visor, with a slit and grid like openings to let the wearer see. It looked incredibly well crafted. Expensive to be sure.

**Helmet – Faenhold Warmage Helmet [Rare]**

*Wisdom +5*

*Wood Magic Control +2%*

*Stun Resistance +18%*

"This thing is really fucking good, Yrenor. Are you sure you want me to have it?" Adrian asked.

The old man sat down with a sigh. "The one it belonged to has no use for it. And you look pitiful with that soldier helmet."

"Thank you. I really appreciate it," Adrian said and put the helmet on. His eyes quickly got used to the steel in his face, the slits placed rather expertly to allow for a mostly unimpeded vision. At least it seemed that way to him.

“If you die with that on, I’ll make you go back for it,” Yrenor said.

“I won’t need you for that,” Adrian said.

**Soulbound:**

**Essence – 1070**

**Level – 13**

**Vitality – 16**

**Endurance – 10**

**Strength – 9 [11]**

**Skill – 8 [10]**

**Intelligence – 16 [27]**

**Wisdom – 14 [27]**

**Soul skill – Shaping Glass Magic – level 4**

**Equipment:**

**Helmet – Faenhold Warmage Helmet [Rare]**

Wisdom +5

Wood Magic Control +2%

Stun Resistance +18%

**Chest – Faenhold Mage Robe [Rare]**

Intelligence +5

Wind Magic Control +2%

Mana Shield +25%

**Arms – Faenhold Warmage Bracers [High]**

Intelligence +4

Fire Magic Mana Cost -2%

**Hands – Faenhold Mage Gloves [High]**

Wisdom +2

Magic Projectile Speed +1%

**Belt – Leather Belt [Adequate]**

Intelligence +2

**Legs – Faenhold Mage Pants [High]**

Wisdom +4

Fire Resistance +1%

**Boots – Faenhold Mage Boots [High]**

Wisdom +2

Fire Resistance +5%

**1h Weapon – Faenhold Spear [Adequate]**

Skill +2

**Off hand – Knight Shield [Adequate]**

Strength +2