

53. Incompetent Subordinates

Damien looked at the pathetic man below him. His skin was shredded and torn, his eyes were sunken, and his skin looked deathly pale. Then, with a wave of his hand, the many black vines encasing Leon's body like a cocoon slithered away.

"What a smart little plant," Damien said with amusement, "Maybe you are the one absorbing all the mana here and making those spiders mindless?" Damien said while poking the vines with his cane. The vine gradually curled up his cane but paused before his hand as if trying to admit defeat.

Damien smiled at the intelligent plant, "You and I are going to be in a business relationship soon. So you give me sap, and I will provide food, like these spider corpses that I have gifted you."

Damien pointed towards the centre of the cavern. There was a mountain of spider corpses that Damien had grouped up with Psychokinesis. Pulsating black vines covered every inch of the mountain as blood was pumped away.

'Maybe with all that blood and mana, the plant will turn into some creature with intelligence? That would be interesting...' Damien mused.

"Thar and Varn carry Leon back to the surface. Take the torch with you. Fay and I will investigate the rest of the cavern and return later." Thar and Varn bowed and left the cave with Leon without another word. They were secretly crying tears of joy from being allowed to leave this cursed cave.

The black vine unwound itself from Damiens cane as he walked towards the far end, where a small opening to a tunnel could be seen. The black vines parted where he walked, which Damien found quite adorable.

The tunnel was quite tight with Damien's large frame, but he crouched his way through. He had already checked the majority of

the cavern with Clairvoyance when he first entered. Since he had never visited this Dungeon during the game, it was essential to be cautious.

Psychic mages have two strengths above all other schools of magic, no cast times and information gathering. If a Psychic mage were to be ambushed by some mere monsters in a cave, it would be an embarrassment to all Psychic mages out there.

The dense rock limited his range to only around 20 meters, but it was enough to check the cave's contents at the end of this tunnel, and it possessed just what he was looking for...

Spider eggs.

Damien and Fay glanced around at the black eggs the size of human heads that covered the cave's walls in a web of silk.

Fay quickly caught onto Damien's plan, "Master, do you wish to raise these spiders as pets?"

Damien nodded as he looked around, "I planned to enslave those spiders in the cavern, but communication seemed futile. I have no use for mindless monsters that I have to control all the time manually. The number one reason a drug cartel fails is disloyal or incompetent subordinates. If I can utilise people I have under soul or blood contracts to do the complicated work and then use monsters for the grunt work, then there should be no problems."

Fay then laughed, "What about that Leon fellow? I could practically smell his bloodlust and hatred for you."

Damien answered while prodding a spider egg with his cane, "Once he has served his purpose, I will feed him to the vines, just like everyone else who outlives their worth in this town. Blackthorn is my territory now, and I will not tolerate people who try to go against me. This is not a democracy."

Fay tilted her head, "Democracy? What's that."

"A political idea that works great in places where everyone is somewhat equal, but in a world like this where mages can kill mundanes without repercussions... well, it doesn't matter. I have too many enemies coming after me already. I don't need a town of backstabbers at my front gate. There is no future here for the disloyal."

Damien pointed towards the grotesque and disturbingly big spider eggs, "Night Crawlers use earth magic to dig tunnels and are large enough to carry goods on their back. If I could have a fleet of Night Crawlers at my beck and call, I could build a complex underground network for drug smuggling. Not to mention they would be loyal and couldn't betray me. I mean, who could understand spider speak?"

Fay then commented, "How do you plan to tame them?"

Damien let out a sigh as he shook his head, "I have some ideas but no concrete solution like a *tame monster* skill. However, vampires do keep creatures as pets, and I have heard that one of the Noble Vampires from house Vladthorn raises demonic bats to carry messages for him, a rather weird guy. But I digress. If he can tame monsters, then surely I can as well."

"Maybe try dripping some blood on their eggs?" Fay suggested, "Or saturate them with your mana, so they recognise you."

Damien nodded, "Those were my thoughts as well."

Slashing his wrist with his own claw, Damien allowed a single drop of blood to fall onto each of the ostrich sized spider eggs. The blood was absorbed and gave the black eggs a slight red hue.

Damien then carefully pushed his Psychic mana into the spider eggs. He chose Psychic mana to boost the spiders' intelligence and potentially help them unlock telepathy. It was a long shot, but Damien felt the idea of a spatial affinity spider was too terrifying, especially if he failed to control them.

Maybe he would raise an army of teleporting spiders in the future, but that day was not today.

This time, there were no visible changes to the eggs, but he could feel the mana swirling around in the black liquid surrounding the little spiderlings.

Damien and Fay stood there for a while, yet nothing happened.

"Come on. It's getting late. We can check on them tomorrow." Damien said with a sigh as he left the cave. Both his lazy trait and weary body were practically screaming at him to have a nice long sleep.

Little did Damien know, once they left the cavern and entered sleep's warm embrace, in the middle of the late night as the full moon hung in the starlit sky, a new species of spider awoke in a small cave beneath the surface.

Within a smoked filled room, a young man slumped in a wooden chair, puffing a crudely made cigarette that loosely hung from his lips. His crossed legs were up on a desk, and a brown cap laid over his closed eyes. His arms dangled loosely at his sides, occasionally swinging to keep the blood flowing.

Suddenly, a low but urgent whisper was heard throughout the room, "Duke Henson, I found-" and then it went silent once more.

The young man stirred in his seat as he removed the cap from his eyes. His expression went from drowsiness to surprise as he noticed one of the many communication stones slowly fading.

Jumping up from his seat, he leaned on the table for a moment as the blood rushed from his head, making him feel dizzy. Then, getting his pathetic situation under control, the man walked over to the wall.

Just like all the walls in this room, it was covered in hundreds of labelled communication stones. The briefly lit up one was labelled: *Spy: 1034*.

"Spy 1034..." the man muttered as he opened up the only book on his desk. Then, coughing as he haphazardly skimmed through the yellowing pages, "Ah, here we go, Spy 1034. Also known as John, he was last assigned to Blackthorn town a month ago."

The communication stones were one way so that he couldn't communicate with John. It was to avoid any chance of him accidentally leaking information. Many wind spells could fake a person's voice or mind magic to control John to gather information.

The man pulled out a draw on his desk and found a folder that contained all of John or Spy 1034's logs. Opening to the most recent page, he added in the man's most recent report: "Duke Henson, I found-"

"What a weird message..." the man thought to himself and shrugged. He was simply the bookkeeper for these backwater agents. The more high priority spies were handled personally by either the Duke or his secretary.

After putting in the entry, he debated telling his supervisor but groaned at the thought as he looked around the smoke-filled room, "That old geezer will just shout at me for smoking on the job again. I'll tell them later... maybe."

Putting away the folder into the draw and lazily closing the massive book, the young man lit up another cig and put his feet back up, "Man, I hate this job..." he muttered as he placed his cap over his eyes and daydreamed flying through the sky with a mage girlfriend in tow.

