Chapter -102

We stepped out through the veil of darkness, entering into a cave with stalagmites poking up from the floor and stalactites hanging down from the ceiling. Their formations seemed to be due to a steady drip of red liquid flowing through the cracks in the rocks above our heads.

In the very center of the cavern was a small pond of the same red liquid and an unnaturally-shaped silver skeleton crouched in the middle of it, hugging its legs. Like the Anointed, it had a short torso and overlong limbs with claws protruding from the tips of its boney hands. The skull was also far more angular than that of a human, having an almost arrow-like shape.

Drip… drip… drip… came the sound of the occasional drops from above, as they trickled down the ends of the stalactites and hit the tops of stalagmites below. The many protrusions were like teeth and I couldn't shake the uncanny sense that the cave itself was the maw of some stone beast.

Then the skeleton stood up to its full height, reaching nearly nine feet. It looked towards us, while the red liquid from the pond began to crawl up its silver bones, forming a faux flesh around them.

I immediately began charging for it, weaving between the stalagmites to get to the pond before it could finish its transformation.

"Stay close!" I told Bee. "The others might be right behind us."

She did her best to keep up with me on foot, utilizing her wings to turn her strides into propelled hops and maneuvering around the mineral spires with ease.

"Same deal as before," Panda said, "Don't let it hit you with its blood attacks."

"The appraisal is ominous," Bee muttered, as she shared it with me.

Level 15	'Red Scion'	Boss	x
"I am a Droplet of the Queen's Blood!" *A Red Scion is created from a single Droplet of the Flayed Queen's unholy Blood that has found its way to a planet, and, around it, the blood of the earth formed a body. The Anointed are similar in their creations, except they are formed from a droplet of a Scion's blood. So, if you had a hard time with those posers, you're in for a world of hurt with this one.*			

> *Scions cannot retain their bodies indefinitely as the blood of the earth always seeks to return to liquid. As a recompense for gifting the Cult a modicum of its power, they constructed a fitting skeleton for it out of silver. While the Queen's Droplet is housed within the silver cranium, the Scion can move the skeleton with ease, but it still prefers to coat itself in blood, boosting its physical and magical powers.*
>
> *There exists a stage above Scion, but pray that you never encounter it.*

From the bottom of its feet and to about the clavicle bone, was a layer of flesh and muscle formed of the viscous red water, but the full transformation was yet to complete. Since there were only twenty feet separating me from the Scion, I kicked off into a leap, with my fist pulled back and ready for a powerful punch.

"*Punch.spinTheWheel( )*!" I yelled, swinging my fist forward to strike its silver cranium. Time froze and the voice of the strange Announcer filled the cavern, while the middle-knuckle of my balloon gauntlet just barely kissed the Scion's yet-to-form face.

Welcome back to the show everyone!

We've got another exciting one for you again today!

Last time, Player 'Gambit' triggered 'The Power of Friendship'. This option has been removed from the board and replaced with a new one.

As before, we have six potential outcomes of this Lottery ability:

Loot Piñata

Jelly Bones

10x Damage

Arney the Tickler

Lucky Die

Demon Incursion

Which option are you betting on at home? I know quite a few Wrath Demons who are going all in on 'Demon Incursion', am I right or am I right?

Audience laughter

"Seriously, where's that laughter coming from?" Panda wondered as he stood on my head and looked around, the only one amongst us that could move and talk. Bee's eyes lifted up to follow the golden wheel that was lowered down in front of me.

Say it with me now: SPIN THAT WHEEL!

"Don't hit Arney the Tickler!" Panda told me, as if I had any agency in the outcome.

"Spin that wheel!" I yelled, faking enthusiasm.

There was a pause and I feared the Announcer was upset that I didn't put enough *oomph* behind it, but then the wheel began to spin.

It spun around with furious speed, before the flapper at the top began to slow it down. Looking at the rotations made my head spin, and I tried desperately not to throw up in my time-frozen state. The green and red triangular slices unblurred into intelligible text, and I kept my eyes fixed on the '*10x Damage*' while it spun around.

As it slowed down, it looked very much like it'd stop at '*Demon Incursion*', but then it just barely squeaked past and hit '*Loot Piñata*'.

The result is:
'Loot Piñata'!
I know you are all disappointed with this outcome, and so am I!
Better luck next time!

As for the effect, here is what it does:
'The target is afflicted with the 'Piñata' curse, meaning that it explodes in a shower of thematically-appropriate loot upon death.'
Additionally, it is impossible to overcome this type of death, meaning no Cheat Death or Resurrection for the unlucky bastard in question!

The wheel lifted into the ceiling and disappeared, before time resumed.

Boink! came the sound of my fist, seemingly doing no damage.

My momentum carried me around and past the boss, and I skipped across the cavern floor for a few feet, while Bee began to open up with her spells, which hit the boss ineffectually, even though she was firing close-ranged into its head.

Then the crimson pondwater finished coating the silver skeleton, with not a single drop left in the floor cavity it'd been occupying. In an instant, the Scion's body changed from a wet liquid texture and into matte red skin. The face that stared at us looked very similar to that of the Mayor, but it was like a younger version of him, with more angular and predatory features, as well as long elf ears for some reason.

I couldn't help but grin at the sight. "I knew we'd find some connection to him here!"

Bee lopped a Beetle Bomb at the boss, which fell next to its foot and exploded in a shower of shrapnel. The sounds of the many flechettes *plinking* against stone echoed across the cave and I quickly got back to my feet to exploit the opening she'd made.

"Watch out!" Panda yelled and I threw myself flat on my stomach immediately, just as a halo of sharp blood pulsed out from the Scion, widening out from it as the central point and shearing the air with a strange *swish*.

Bee wasn't quick enough to react, and the top of one of her left wings was cut off.

"Careful! Its blood-attacks inflict some kind of debuff!" she warned.

I got back up and grabbed one of the stalagmites with Brock, then threw it directly at the boss, utilizing his Pitcher upgrade, which increased accuracy and speed with any thrown projectile.

The mineral spike was blocked by a wall of blood that the Scion created from holes in its right hand. Its left foot was mangled thanks to Bee's attack, but it was clear that we had to destroy the head somehow.

A shard of crystalized blood fired my way and I quickly side-stepped it, but it curved around and struck me in the side, piercing my Suit deep enough to hit my skin below.

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WARNING!

You have been infected with '*Fiendblood Sickness (5%)*'!

Time remaining:

10 minutes

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The effect was immediate, as I felt a jab of pain travel through my body in a wave radiating out from where the shard dug in. I quickly grabbed it with my right hand, but it was also sharp along the edges and sliced through Brock and into my palm, though I managed to toss it away.

"*Ouch!!*" he squealed, although he didn't pop, which was a relief. Then again, I wasn't sure it was actually possible for him to pop.

WARNING!

You have been infected with '*Fiendblood Sickness (10%)*'!

Time remaining:

20 minutes

"Ah shit…" I muttered, diving out of the way as a crescent of cutting blood was sent straight for my neck. It continued on through several stalactites before dissipating into nothingness.

"Watch out for the shards, they're homing!" I yelled to Bee. "Also, the debuff stacks!"

"It's slowly draining your Stamina and Health," Panda said.

"How quickly? Not 10% at a time right?"

"The percentage seems to be how much of your overall vitals it will drain, based on the rate and duration. So when it's done, you'll have lost 10% of your overall Stamina and Health."

"I'd better kill it before it can up that percentage, huh?"

I pushed myself back up onto my feet, while Bee hit the Scion with three-out-of-four of her Moth Missile's projectiles, only to immediately fire it again.

"We've gotta break the head!" I told her, while running around to the opposite side of her, such that the boss had to do a full 180 to deal with me. As soon as I got there, I spun on my heel and ran straight for it, putting my right hand against my chest and drawing my Giant-Slayer Soul Blade.

'**Giant-Slayer Soul Blade**'	x
Unique Ability	
Why is your Soul shaped like that?	
Draw a blade formed of your own soul, the shape of which is unique to you, and which disappears after a single attack. It	

> *deals damage equal to all your Attributes combined and multiplied by the level difference between you and your target.*
>
> *By holding the Blade above your head, you can charge it to deal up to 3x its normal damage based on how long it is charged.*
>
> *If the blade takes damage, you suffer 3x the amount of damage as a result.*
>
> ***Cooldown:*** *20 minutes*
> *If used to kill a Boss, the cooldown resets.*
>
> **This ability appears on your Appraisal!**

What came out was neither a banana nor a corn-on-the-cob, but instead a large yellow carrot.

"Ah, what the hell?" I muttered, before lifting it up above my head to charge it up.

The carrot began to elongate and turn into a spear that scraped against the cave ceiling.

"That isn't a blade," Panda commented unhelpfully.

Without warning, the Scion pointed its right palm over its shoulder at me while still looking in Bee's direction, firing off another homing crystal shard.

"Dodgeroll!" Panda yelled.

I obliged just in time for the shard to go right through me, thanks to my I-Frames passive.

> **'I-Frames'** ^x
>
> *Passive*
>
> *We're not sure how this works…*
>
> **Dodgerolling allows you to phase through attacks if timed correctly.**

The blood shard hit the ground and shattered. As I finished my roll, I came up with a jab of my carrot spear, ramming right into the back of the Scion and tearing a deep hole through its small torso. As soon as the spear disappeared, the Scion spun around and swung a clawed foot right at my body with such suddenness I only managed to stumble back a single step and lift my right arm up in front of my face.

Blood poured out from the tips of its clawed toes and crystalized into blades on their tips, extending its reach enough that it carved right through my forearm and along the left side of my Carapace Suit's breast.

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WARNING!

You have been infected with '*Fiendblood Sickness (20%)*'!

Time remaining:

40 minutes

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Bee came right up behind the boss, as I stumbled back, spilling my blood all over the place.

"Moth Missile!" she roared, firing her spell right into the back of the Scion's head with enough force to explode the red flesh and skin away to expose the silver cranium.

The Scion whirled around to address her, perhaps thinking I was no longer a threat. But, in doing so, it exposed the opening she'd made.

"Beetle Barrier!" Bee shouted, making her moth fur hard like metal and absorbing the retaliatory strike with hardly a scrape left behind.

I gritted my teeth and took a long step forward while absolutely hammering Brock into the exposed silver dome of the boss.

"*Fak yuu!!*" he squealed.

The impact sent a jolt of electricity all down its silver skeleton, which easily conducted the static I'd built up in Brock through moving around. As its whole body spasmed, it became momentarily paralyzed. The built-up air in the gauntlet empowered the blow, but it was only strong enough to cause a crack to form. Air was also sucked out of the Scion's body, refilling the balloon weapon with power.

I swung again, while Bee also took the chance to use her Beetle Blast at point-blank range to shred its face.

"*Eat turds!!*" Brock yelled as the second hit landed. The crack became a small hole.

The Scion started to move as I swung my fist the third time, but by then it was too late.

<p style="text-align:center; color:red;">ACTIVATING SCRIPT: Math.<i>multiply</i>(Punch)!</p>

Brock hit the back of its skull with so much force that it flew off the silver spine, a massive hole in the back of it, and most of the flesh and skin that'd adorned it gone. As it hit the ceiling, it rebounded back to the floor where it cracked like an egg, spilling a deep-crimson yolk.

Then the 'Loot Piñata' effect kicked in and the boss' entire body exploded into confetti and candy, as well as coins and wisps of loot, with not a drop of its unholy blood anywhere to be seen.