

Chapter -84

My vision went completely white and the concussive blast of the flashbang made all the sounds around me garbled and weird. High-pitched screams and panicked shouts, crunching impacts and tearing fabric, tremors from stomping and magical blasts, all of these sounds melded together into a soup of incoherent noise.

“Throw yourself to the left!” Panda yelled, his voice cutting through the noise.

Before I could heed his advice, a sharp pain pierced the right side of my clavicle, near to the hole for my plugin. Dumbly, I threw myself onto the floor a second after, before grasping for the sharp sides of the hard piece of glass stuck in my body.

WARNING!

You have been infected with ‘*The Nasty Neighborhood’s Concoction*’!

Time remaining:

N/A

It came loose with just a couple tugs and I threw it away, but I could already feel a pulsing pain building from where it’d hit me.

“Am I melting from the inside out!?” I yelled to Panda.

“You’re fine! I think your Suit and high Vitality is helping you resist it.”

My vision suddenly returned, although everything had strange after-images following behind their actual movements. Twenty feet away, three Players were laying into the large bat monster with their attacks, physical and magical both, while a fourth guy was folded onto himself like a lawn-chair, thanks to the boss landing on him with all its weight.

Drifting lazily in the air was a bright-glowing flare, which illuminated the many rows of seats, and, thanks to this, the Players were able to actually inflict damage on the boss. But, even with its gimmick defeated through the use of light, they were having a rough go at it.

I pushed myself up from the floor and tried to get my bearings. The pain in my upper torso was spreading through my body in waves, bringing an interesting tingling numbness with it and slowing down my movements. The hole where the shard had pierced me was already closed, thanks to the Suit’s apparently-reactive nature.

Nearby lay the projectile that’d hit me, and it was a green-glowing glass dart that was eerily reminiscent of Uranium. It was a jagged and ugly piece of work, obviously designed to create nasty wounds, while delivering some kind of poison or sickness.

My eyes went towards the booth I’d seen the movement in before everything went down, and I managed to just catch the moment that Bee, who was hovering in the air, threw a Beetle Bomb in amongst its seats.

With a *bang* the booth was perforated with flechettes. A moment later, a figure stumbled forward, while aiming an overlong right arm at the Moth Magician. His whole body was transformed into a lopsided disgusting thing, but it was unmistakably Logan.

Before he could fire another of his poisoned glass darts, I carefully aimed a punch in his direction.

“*Blam!!*” Brock exclaimed, as my gauntlet hit the air and sent a blast across the hall. It connected with the side of Logan’s strange arm-rifle and pushed it off-course, just as he fired a shot.

Instead of striking Bee in the stomach, the dart shot past her and disappeared into the back seats.

“Moth Missile!” she yelled and mothballs shot out of her palm, taking ponderous trajectories as they flew towards the fucked-up-looking Logan.

He quickly ducked behind a messed-up backrest of a chair, which absorbed all but one of the missiles. But, although the impact clearly hurt him a lot, he pounced out from behind his cover and shot a long glowing-green tongue towards Bee, which wrapped around her wings and chest, before flinging her into the ground with a whipping motion.

Her body bounced off a seat, before she came to a halt, but I was quickly by her side, ready with an Interrupt if Logan tried to follow-up with another attack. However, she had landed in a place that he couldn’t easily see from his high vantage, so he’d have to leave the safety of his booth if he wanted to exploit the opening, which seemed unlikely.

“Are you okay?” I asked, looking at her and noticing that there were a bunch of tiny holes on her body from where Logan’s creepy tongue had touched her.

Bee was shaking, but she managed to sit up. “I think I broke my left arm. I’m also poisoned.”

“Is it the Nasty Concoction? I got hit by that too.”

“No, it’s called ‘Sickspittle’. It has a duration of 10 minutes and I think it’s draining my Stamina and Mana.”

She made a gasp of surprise.

“What? What’s wrong!?” I asked.

“My Benefactor just sent me something called a ‘*Live-Well Apple*’. Apparently it cures poison effects! That’s so thoughtful!”

She immediately pulled a glass apple full of some kind of reddish syrup into her hand, but when I tried to inspect it I got an unsettling error message:

ERROR!

You do not have permission to inspect this item!

**THIS IS NOT FOR THE EYES OF CREATURES LIKE YOU.
ONLY MY ADORABLE LOST CHILD MAY PARTAKE IN MY GIFT.
TAKE CARE THAT YOU DO NOT HARM THIS CHILD.
I WILL VISIT DEVASTATION UPON YOU IF YOU FAIL HER.**

“...Yikes.”

“I told you, don’t piss off Absolutes!” Panda hissed. “Also, what are you standing around for! Go kill Logan!”

Before I could even take my first step in his direction, a shout of victory went up from the last two surviving Players, after they’d taken down Louie the Nightwing. The enormous bat lay in a heap next to the two Players. One of them had a sword and a shield, along with a brown-and-black football uniform and helmet for protection, and the other wielded a staff and wore a blue jogging suit.

DUNGEON ‘The Dark Theatre’ CLEARED!

Recommended Player level: 9

Average Player level: 4

Player survivors: 4

Player deaths: 15

Enemies slain: 0

Bosses slain: 1

WARNING!

The Dungeon will close in 60 seconds!

You will be returned to your last known location outside the Dungeon perimeter!

“Fuck!” I cursed and began running towards the wall just below Logan’s elevated VIP booth, but the sickness coursing through my veins was making my body sluggish.

No sooner had the mage and swordsman Players returned to the realization of why they were in this dungeon, than the staff-wielding guy was hit in the forehead with one of those glowing darts. He didn’t even scream, instead just dropping to the ground and starting to liquify.

The swordsman yelled in shock and outrage, before pulling a can of beans out of thin air and hurling it up into the VIP booth. It exploded in a flash of light and sound.

Standing directly below the booth, I tried to jump up to reach it, but didn’t even clear four feet.

“What the hell is this Concoction!?” I complained.

Fortunately, I had an idea that I’d been wanting to try. I immediately began blowing air into my gauntlet, much to Brock’s elation.

Then, a few seconds later, when the fingers were bloated sausages and the swordsman was hiding behind the large bat’s corpse to escape the shots from above, I hopped into the air again, but this time punched down towards the floor, making sure not to hit anything.

“*Wheeeew!!*”

The resultant explosion of air from the ‘Pump It!’ and ‘Air Blast’ combined sent me flying up towards the ceiling. As I fell back down, I managed to just barely catch the lip of the booth where it poked out from the wall of the theatre hall.

I began climbing up over the tiny wall of the booth, only to look directly at the tip of Logan’s arm-barrel.

Up close, it was hard not to appreciate just how fucked-up his body had become. He had looked like a supermodel mixed with a cringey Roman God cosplay the first time I’d encountered him, but now the right side of his face was drooping as though the bone-structure was gone and his eyes glowed a sickly green color. He had developed a pot-belly and his left arm was shrunken in both muscle and length, with his right having its forearm grown three times its normal length and turning into an organic rifle of his own body. A stubby white horn with black veins grew from the middle of his forehead, and his overlong glowing tongue drooped out from his too-wide mouth full of sharp teeth.

“*.interrupt()*,” I said, just as it looked like he was about to fire his rifle at my head, before pushing myself up and swinging my gauntlet into his face.

Logan moved around my strike with the grace of a slimy eel, then shot out his tongue, which wrapped around my arm and yanked me forward, making me stumble for a moment.

WARNING!

You have been infected with ‘*Sickspittle*’!

Time remaining:

5.70776256E-6 years

“*I’ll ... kill you!*” he croaked.

I got both of my feet down on the floor into an immovable stance, then pulled back against his tongue, which snapped free of his mouth, though remained stuck to me.

He yowled in pain and two long glowing claws sprouted from his tiny T-Rex arm. When he swung them at my throat, I sidestepped it and punched him in the face, breaking his nose.

“What’s wrong Logan!? Cat got your tongue?”

BAD CATCHPHRASE!

You have taken 1 point of damage.

“Ow.”

Before I could strike him again, a filthy soap-bubble-looking barrier appeared around him, pushing me back. I recognized it as a bastardized version of the ‘Sacred Barrier’ I’d seen him use during the Weaponlution Event.

I leapt forward with a punch, which connected with the bubble and pushed it back a few feet, taking him with it, although no damage was seemingly inflicted.

He opened his mouth and shot a glob of acid towards me, which I couldn’t avoid since I was right in front of him, but the moment it hit me it reflected off my armour and bounced directly back at him, covering his bubble in a layer of green goop.

Before I could try anything else to crack his cowardly protective spell, another dungeon announcement hit me:

DUNGEON CLOSING!

Returning you to your last known location outside the dungeon perimeter!

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

I pointed my index finger at him as we were transported out of the Dark Theatre.