
Chapter 13: Q & A

I just stared at him, dumbfounded.

What was this old bat saying?

"What? You can't be serious, right?" I managed to blurt out.

He just tilted his head in response, "Why not?"

"F-for one thing! I'm a human! Is it even allowed to have humans in this kingdom? Also, I need to make sure my family is okay and tell them I'm still alive," I refuted.

At this, the grandpa went silent as he pondered a little bit before speaking again.

"Living here isn't a problem as long as you're under my name. As for your parents... Brat, is it an absolute necessity to meet them in person?"

It was my turn to ponder this time.

"I mean, I guess it isn't strictly a necessity for me to meet my parents in person. Although I miss them, the most important thing is finding out how they're doing and letting them know that I'm fine if they are as well," I answered.

"Then come with me tomorrow morning; be outside the manor by six in the morning, sharp."

Before he turned to leave, I stopped him, "Wait! I don't get why you want me as your disciple. Also, you sound awfully hurried. Isn't it possible for me to go back home and spend a bit of time with my parents before coming back here to train under you?"

"I want you to be my disciple because I see your potential. Kid. An uncountable number of people have asked me to take them in as their disciple, from rich to poor, from young to old. But do you know how many I've taken in so far? None! These new generation brats bore me. Just because some of the wealthy noble brat's parents thought their kid was special, they thought they were qualified to ask me to be their mentor"

I just furrowed my brows, not knowing where Tessia's grandpa is going with this.

"... You're different. I know you have exceptional talent in mana manipulation and only God knows how but you possess better technique than even I, but that isn't the reason why I decided on teaching you. Brat...I need to ask you. How are you a beast tamer?" Any sort of amusement that had been on his face previously was all but gone as his sharp facial feature emitted a deathly gaze.

"beast tamer? What are you talking about?" I was really confused. Although it was getting well into the night and the elder had already sent Tessia in to sleep, it didn't seem like this conversation was going to end soon.

"Let's go back inside and talk," he said, leading me to a living room with couches and a roaring fireplace.

Sitting down on a couch, he continued. "Let's start from the beginning. I assume you know that mana beasts possess mana cores just like humans, elves and dwarves right?"

I nodded at this.

"Right. Just like mana beasts, humans, elves and dwarves possess qualities in their mana cores that are distinct to their own race."

He picked up a piece of paper and began drawing a chart.

Water - Ice

Plant

Earth - Gravity

Magma, Metal

Fire - Lightning

Wind - Sound

"These are the four basic elements and their higher forms. The higher forms—Ice, Metal, Lightning, Sound—can only be controlled by mages especially adept at a particular basic element, i.e. a deviant. This is where the distinct racial qualities lie..." He wrote a brief description under each race

Humans

Human mages possess the ability to manipulate all four basic elements and are the only race capable of having deviants that can control the higher form of their adept element. They also have deviants that can even transcend the four basic elements, like healers (emitters), making their mana cores the most diverse.

Elves

Elven mages can only manipulate water, wind, and earth but with much higher affinity. We also have a special trait distinct to our race that allows very pure-blooded mages to control plants. However, elves don't have deviants that can manipulate water, wind, and earth into their higher forms.

Dwarves

Dwarven mages can only manipulate earth and fire but, like elves, they possess a much higher affinity to those two elements. Their distinct trait lies in the fact that all dwarves are able to mold and bend metal, while some deviants possess the special ability to manipulate both earth and fire into magma, something even human deviants are not able to do, much less elves. However, they can only manipulate those two basic elements and, like elves, do not possess the ability to control the higher form of the basic elements.

"Wait I'm not getting all of this. Why can't humans manipulate plants and magma?" I asked while reading his handy info chart.

"Good question. Only elves can manipulate plant, which is the only form of nature that is alive, because of our lineage being highly affinitive to the nurturing elements. Only the Dwarf race can manipulate magma and metal

because, like us elves, their lineage makes them highly adept to the constructing elements."

I started subconsciously rubbing the bridge of my nose as my brain whirled.

"Okay. I get the differences between the three three races, but what does that have to do with me being a beast tamer? What does that even mean anyway?"

"I'm getting to that brat!" he barked.

"Mana beasts are different from the three humanoid races because each species have their own special characteristics. Listing all of them would be endless so I'll give you a simple example. Mages, adventurers or not, are classified: E, D, C, B, A, AA, S, SS class. This classification is the same for mana beasts as well. Take the sonic hawk. They are B Class beasts that possess incredible speed while in flight. They all have to affinity for wind and sound. These attributes are innate in their mana cores. Regardless of their affinity, if these mana cores are taken out and given to a human or elf mage that specialize in the wind element, their training will go by much faster than just cultivating mana from their surroundings but that's it."

I impatiently waited as elder Virion gulped down a glass of water before continuing.

"...However! When a mana beast reaches A class or higher, they have the ability to pass on their 'will', or ability to be more precise, to one person. I called you a beast tamer earlier because you have a mana beast's will in your mana core and from my estimation, not just any will but an S class mana beast's will if not an SS class will. I'm only able to sense this because I'm a beast tamer as well, although the beast's will that I tamed was an AA class beast, the shadow panther."

So that's how he was able to be so unusually fast.

Noticing the look of revelation on my face, Elder Virion just chuckled. "Yes brat, I was able to bully you that badly by utilizing my Shadow Panther's will. But I only used around 50% of my speed." He shot me a wink.

He was able to go even faster?

Everything was beginning to make sense; the strange, faint markings that appeared on my mana core after Sylvia gouged through it and how she said my future progress would depend on understanding her power.

My eyes welled up with tears as I lowered my head, trying to keep my tears from falling.

"You must have been through a lot, child. I'm not going to push you for an answer, but the reason why it is urgent for me to guide you is because you don't have much time." He said in a warm but stern voice.

"What do you mean?" I sniffled, looking up at him.

"The power from your mana core is too strong for your immature body to handle. Let me ask you this, boy. Have you recently felt a burning pain coming from your mana core." The look on my face must've confirmed his suspicions because he nodded solemnly. "If you don't learn to control your new mana core, it'll destroy your body." His eyes looked straight at me, dissolving any doubt I may have had.

"..."

"I understand. It seems I have no choice but to be under your guidance. However, I don't think I would be able to focus on training without making sure that my family is all right and that they know I'm safe too. You mentioned something about that earlier?" I say, trying to put my emotions under control.

"Haha! Just call me Grandpa from now on. My first disciple should at least be able to call me that. And who knows, maybe I'll become your grandpa-in-law." He shot me another wink.

He chuckled as my eyes widened in response before continuing. "We'll go see an old friend of mine tomorrow that'll take care of your worries. What I need from you starting now is your utmost diligence. Even I'm not sure how long it'll take for you to master the basics of your beast's will. In my two hundred years of living, I've never seen such a young mage, let alone a beast tamer at that. You're going to bring big changes into this world brat. I just know it."

I just scratched my cheek, my cheeks hot from embarrassment.

"Go to sleep now brat! Tomorrow is going to be a long day. You'll need the rest."

I got up and bowed before wishing him goodnight. "Goodnight...Grandpa."

He chuckled, waving me off and I plopped into my bed, too tired to even get under the covers.

I roused from my sleep, grunting, feeling a heavy sensation weighing down on my body.

Were they my worries? My burdens? The expectations placed on me? Are these weighing down on me even as I slept?

"G' morning Art! Wake up!"

I opened my eyes and see that my burdens have taken the form of a lovely young lady very similar in appearance to my friend Tess.

"Come on sleepyhead! You need to meet grandpa soon! H-hey! Don't go back to sleep!" She bounced up and down, still straddled on top of me.

Did she not know how indecent this may look to others? Haa...the innocence of youth.

"I get it! I'm up, Tess! Please get down from my stomach so I can get up," I groaned, still half asleep.

"Hehe~ Art, your hair looks funny. Hey hey, is it true you're going to be staying here for a while? Grandpa told me this morning! I'm so happy! You're really staying, right? Right?" Tess exclaimed with a wide smile pasted on her cute face.

How the hell was she so energetic this early in the morning?

Trying to tame my bed hair, I responded, "We'll know for sure after my trip with Elder Virion, but most likely, it seems I'll be bothering you for a bit longer, Princess."

She stabbed my side with her finger, "Not Princess! Tess! T.E.S.S.! I'm going to get upset if you don't treat me better."

Damn it, she looked so cute with her pouting face.

"All right, all right! I have to shower and get ready so unless you want to see me naked, I think you should leave the room, Tess." I waggled my eyebrows lewdly.

"Eek! I'm leaving you pervert!" I could see her ears turn scarlet as she scurried out of the room.

I didn't think that'd work so well. My four-year-old body hasn't even matured any of its "manly parts" anyhow.

I just shrugged and hopped into the shower to get ready, making sure to keep the feather-wrapped stone inside my robe.

As I made my way down the flight of curved stairs, a butler opened the front door for me and I spotted a small carriage with Grandpa Virion and Tess inside.

"Father! It is not appropriate for a human to be residing within this kingdom!"

"Alduin is right, Elder Virion. Although saving Tessia is something I will forever be grateful for, having a human stay here goes against all traditions."

I heard The King and Queen talking to Grandpa Virion as he is lazily leaned back inside the carriage.

"BAH! Screw traditions! I've taken a liking to that brat and so has Tessia, haven't you child," he snorted.

"G-grandpa! It's not like that! He's just..." her voice trailed off at the end, face glowing.

"Hahaha! Anyways! He's going to be under my direct guidance from now on so make sure to let everyone know that he is not to be trifled with!"

"F-father..."

"ENOUGH! This is not up for discussion! Oh brat! You're here! Come! We should hurry!" His expression changed into a smile immediately after seeing me.

I nodded and hopped into the carriage, avoiding the frowns that the King and Queen were giving me.

A little into the journey, I asked Grandpa Virion. "Hey Gramps, where are we headed anyway? You said we were meeting a friend of yours, right?"

"Haha! Gramps eh? Well aren't you awfully comfortable with me now. Good good! As for where we're going, it's a surprise." He threw in a wink.

Tessia has fallen asleep with her head leaning against my shoulder. She must have been tired from waking up so early.

"Take good care of her, Art. She grew up in a very lonely environment," he quietly mutters, a look of compassion filled his eyes as he looked at his sleeping granddaughter.

"What do you mean?"

"Growing up as the only princess of an entire kingdom is very stressful, too much for a child to handle. Growing up with no close friends, it was hard on her. She had gotten hurt too many times by people pretending to befriend her, only to use her for their personal gains. This has made Tessia into someone cold and distant to those around her. Imagine how surprised we all were when we saw you two holding hands." He continues.

"Yeah, I noticed when I heard her talk to the guards," I added.

"Arthur. Tessia has shown more expression, more smiles and laughs, now than she ever had growing up; around you, she finally seems more like a child. For that, I thank you." He patted my other shoulder.

This was the first time Grandpa Virion ever initiated physical contact with me besides sparring, which caught me by surprise.

The carriage came to a gentle halt before the driver opened our carriage door to inform us of our arrival.

"Hey Tess, we're here," I whispered, gently nudging her.

"Mmm..." She eventually stirred awake and we get out of the carriage, arriving at what could only be considered a dainty hut.

"Hey, you old witch! Come out!" Grandpa Virion suddenly yelled while knocking on the door.

Suddenly the door flew open to reveal a hunched elderly lady with grey hair that seemed like it was struck by lightning and wrinkled eyes that were strangely a mixture of multiple colors, all blending together. Dressed in a simple brown robe, she peered down at me with a studying eye.

"Took you long enough to get here!" she scowled.

"Hahaha! Arthur! Let me introduce you to Rinia Darcassan. She's a very special deviant amongst us elves," Grandpa Virion announces.

"It's good seeing you again, Virion. Charming as always, little Tessia," she smiled, patting Tess's head.

Looking at me, she stuck out her hand. "We finally meet young Arthur. I am Rinia. A Diviner."