

Regicide (Terraria 10th anniversary submission)

I looked at the glittering creature in my hand, sparkling all the more vibrantly for the sunlight it was bathing in, going over why I was about to do something so rash. Having dealt with all that the Underworld could throw at me, I inadvertently unleashed its captives upon the surface. I had been able to subjugate most of them with ease but found myself struggling against my foes after the Jungle's secrets had been laid bare. I turned to my companions, hoping they might have an answer to my dilemma and as always, I found salvation in my guide. He told me of rare items, and then even more obscure goods, items so rare as to have no name or presence in history. The Empress of Light was a well-known name, feared by ancient travellers for her quick-to-anger nature, most of the run-down routes taking a detour around her territory to avoid the risk altogether. What was less well-known, however, was that the Empress' power to wield light was due to a special organ, which was greatly enhanced by sunlight. Fighting a powerful foe that was even stronger than normal would typically be a fool's errand, but this enhancement was theorised to enable this organ to retain this versatile ability, even after the death of the Empress.

That was the explanation for why I was standing in the forbidden zone that was the Empress' lands, with one of her many butterfly subjects caught in my palm. A glowing bat rested on my shoulder, watching the Lacewing with curiosity. The hand not covered in glittery dust was instead clenched on the handle of a sword, a recent addition from the guardian of the Jungle. The armour covering me was a coincidental match for this realm of light, being frost-imbued metal that faintly glowed in these bright surroundings. After checking over my equipment a final time, I declared myself ready to begin.

I clenched both hands, with the Lacewing making a sound like broken glass.

A roar that echoed out over the plains followed it.

The Empress emerged from the distance, an aura of every colour trailing in her wake. Her sunlight-yellow skin was adorned with accessories in every shade of blue. All of this was framed by a dress woven from the pinkest rose petals that was fluttering madly from the intense speed. The aura abruptly shot away from the Empress before pausing briefly, suddenly shooting towards me twice as fast. I dodged almost all of the bolts, with one grazing by my blade. The force of the impact was surprisingly low, but raising the blade revealed the reason clearly; there was a smooth path running down the blade, like someone had run a finger through dry dirt. The thought of what it would do if it hit me was enough to send an extra dose of adrenaline through my body.

The Empress had grown closer while I dodged her bolts. My bat flew from its perch towards her, while I scrambled out of her path. I launched a few projectiles from my blade, impressed by the durability of its enchantments; the seed pods didn't seem to do much, but the damage would accumulate quickly. Even with her immense speed, she brushed past trees like a summer breeze, barely ruffling their branches. As she approached (not nearly as fast as before), I hit her with another round of pods. The supernatural frost contained within my armour finally proved its worth, as a faint layer of frost formed over the Empress' body and wings, slowing her down and sapping away her stamina. Several spears of light emerged with the Empress as the source. It was so abrupt that I was hit again, a long gash on my helmet from crest to chin.

Paying utmost attention this time, I saw her begin to accelerate and was able to successfully dodge this time, free to casually observe the small hole the bat had been chewing in the Empress' neck. Her blood was as radiant as the rest of her, the frozen blood drops looking like a rain of opals. Seemingly angered by the bat, the Empress' aura burst out again, except this release wasn't as erratic as the

earlier bolts. This attack was closer to a flower in bloom, each bolt spreading out like the tip of a petal. If it wasn't something that could easily puncture steel, it would be quite mesmerising. Thankfully I had learned my lesson by now and kept a distance while continuing to attack, so the projectiles began to fall short of me, even after the Empress charged closer. I was caught off guard by her next attack.

Blades suddenly erupted from every surface near me like the environment was a hoard of switchblades.

I took a blow directly to the arm and came to the realisation that my right arm was gone below the elbow. The pain hit hard, but it just helped me come to my senses in time to avoid yet another charge. Once the immediate danger had passed, I quickly stuffed the arm into my knapsack, hoping that the wound was as smooth as the mark on my blade. A clean cut would be easier to reattach, and thankfully it felt like the light-blades had somewhat cauterised the wound, with only a trickle of blood to indicate my recently removed limb. By now, the continued attacks from me and the bat had torn down the Empress' regal appearance; blood was pouring from the large gash in her neck, body coated in a thick layer of shimmering ice. If I wasn't the cause of it (and could see it slowing the Empress' movements), I would assume she had switched into a second form or something similar.

The Empress tried a few more attacks, but with impeded mobility and my caution at maximum, she eventually faltered and fell. She didn't get back up after that. Seeing the still body, I edged closer and closer, finally releasing my held breath and tension alike after confirming the kill. Then I had to prepare myself for the unpleasant business after the fight. I wanted an organ and I was getting that organ, no matter how much viscera got in the way. I was used to cleaning up after a hunt, but the Empress was rather unsettlingly human-shaped. I could only put it off for so long though, and then the work began.

The torso was only so large, and the organ took up a large chunk of it. It was a long cone-like shape, a pastel rainbow running down its length, slightly yielding to the touch but stiffening by the second as rigor mortis set in. While I still had time, I compressed the flared base of the cone, creating an attempt of a handle, making it look more like a chunky child's blade. The organ fully stiffened, now feeling like a work of stone wiped to a mirror sheen by a watery touch. I pushed some mana into the new acquisition, seeing a blade of light form like an improvement of the Phasesaber I used to hold. It felt good, but... incorrect, somehow. The intent of my mana changed, and the blade of light lifted itself from the organ, coming to a stop behind my shoulder. The glowing bat that continued to nibble at the Empress let out a cry as it abruptly ceased, its existence overwritten by this razor. This felt better, like I started holding a butterknife by the handle instead of by the blade. With the organ acquired, perhaps for the first time in history, it now needed a name. I knew it needed to showcase the weapons two properties: an incredible sharpness and the vibrant colours it existed in. I thought about one of the stronger weapons I'd seen, a weapon that glowed with a green light that was both eerie and comforting. The Terra Blade. Yes, that would do.

"I name you, Terraprisma."

I began the long walk back to the stronghold, a new companion watching over my back.

By Tornadoawe