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FREE LIFE FANTASY ONLINE: IMMORTAL PRINCESS

– Jingai Hime Sama, Hajimemashita –

- VOLUME 6 -

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[SEVEN SEAS]



**It's a girl
riding on a
broomstick,
just like a
witch!**



Just when the air looks like it's going to tear apart,
the image before me suddenly changes. A giant gate stands
in its place with **something** sitting on a platform before it.
The thing sways on top of a glowing sphere and emits a deep noise.



Eli and Abby are here?
As always, Ms. Letty and
Ms. Dory are behind them.
“I see you managed to
purchase dresses and
maid uniforms.”



FreeLifeFantasy

IMMORTAL PRINCESS Online



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Seven Seas Entertainment

Free Life Fantasy Online ~Immortal Princess, Hajimemashita ~ Vol. 6

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CHARACTER INTRODUCTION

Anastasia:

The main character. Her real name is Tsukishiro Kotone, but she's known as "the Princess." Her race is Aversa Princess, the princess of the afterlife, and she blesses other undead players. Anastasia wields an athame and a book, while her dress serves as her armor. Since she generally attacks with spells from her book, her athame is merely for parrying. The blade of light from her athame only adds to the impression that she's come out of the Star Wars universe.

Alfred:

Alfred is a Dullahan, otherwise known as a headless knight. He evolved into a Nether Dullahan after reaching the Nether for the first time. Alfred fights with a bastard sword, a great shield, and a full suit of armor intrinsic to his race. He's the main tank in his party.

Honehone:

AKA Mr. Skelly. Honehone is an inhuman player who appears in the game as a skeleton. His race is a lich. He fights with a long wooden staff. In his party, Honehone exclusively attacks with spells.

Ame:

Ame is Trine's twin brother. His name comes from the "amethyst" part of the gem "ametrine." He belongs to the wraith race and appears as a transparent human with light purple hair and eyes. Ame is a lively young boy who refers to himself by his own first name. He fights with a synchronized playstyle.

Trine:

Trine is Ame's twin sister. Her name comes from the "citrine" part of the gem "ametrine." She belongs to the wraith race and appears as a transparent human with light yellow hair and eyes. Trine is a lively young girl who refers to herself by her own first name. She fights with a synchronized playstyle.

Akirina:

Anastasia's little sister. Her real name is Tsukishiro Akina, and she plays as a human. Akirina is equipped with a halberd and leather armor. She adores her big sister, although that doesn't mean they play in the same party. Instead, Akirina parties up with her two friends from real life along with her internet friends, in which she plays as a hit-and-run attacker.

Tomo:

The heroine's childhood friend. He plays a human and has books and cloth armor equipped. Tomo serves as a magic attacker for his party.

Sugu:

The heroine's other childhood friend. He plays as a giant and has a two-handed hammer and leather armor equipped. Sugu plays as a muscle-headed attacker.

Eliza:

The daughter of a CEO and another of the heroine's childhood friends. Her nickname is Eli. She plays as a human with a whip and cloth armor for equipment.

Letty:

Eli's personal attendant. She plays as a human with a dagger and cloth armor equipped.

Abby:

The daughter of a CEO and the little sister's childhood friend. She plays as an angel with cloth armor and the kind of wand you'd see in Harry Potter. Abby also had a staff equipped, but it's only to provide her with modifiers, so she doesn't actually use it. Her dolls function like marionettes.

Dory:

Abby's personal attendant. She plays as an angel with martial arts weapons and cloth armor equipped.

Cecil:

The guildmaster of The Knights of Dawn. Cecil plays as a human with dual blades and leather armor. He's a handsome man who looks like he emerged straight from an otome game.

Musasabi:

Guildmaster of NINJA. As a monster slayer, he doesn't quite play as a ninja. No one could ever accuse Musasabi of not enjoying the game to the fullest.

Mead:

A young elf woman. She fights with a longbow and wears leather armor. Mead plays as a huntress and looks exactly how you would expect an elf to look.

Fairellen:

A fairy who loves to fly. She fights with lightning spells, which are combinations of different attributes, and her race is an Eclesith.

Mohawk:

An apocalyptic-themed character who cackles loudly and seems like he's playing a different game than everyone else. He's an extreme roleplayer. He fights with a dagger, wears leather armor, and uses fire spells to sanitize dirty things. According to Mead, he's a loud but nice person.

Vincent:

A new character who plays as a wolf race and uses Dark magic. The way he speaks makes him seem pathetic, so people call him Sad Puppy. He's a large wolf who fights with Dark magic.

Studylover:

Leader of the testing team. He plays as an elf. Studylover focuses on research skills, of course, and he gathers information about all aspects of the game's world.

Ertz:

A top player when it comes to Smithing skills. He plays as a dwarf and roleplays as a hearty man. Ertz = ore.

Dentelle:

A top player when it comes to Needlework skills. He plays as a human and will give you a discount in exchange for screenshots. Dentelle = lace.

Primura:

A top player when it comes to Woodworking skills. She plays as a bunny beastman. In real life, Primura is in eighth grade. Primura = primula flower.

Salute:

A top player when it comes to Compounding skills. She plays as a human and wears a white coat and glasses to look like a scientist. Salute = Health.

Nephrite:

A top player when it comes to Handcrafting. She plays as living machinery. Nephrite = Jade.

Steiner:

Guildmaster of Farmers' Uprising. He wears a straw hat and overalls as his uniform and, of course, fights with farming tools.

RESIDENTS (NETHER)

Prime Minister:

The prime minister of the Evernight Castle located in the Nether. He's something of a manager for the undead of that world.

Svetlana:

AKA Lana. Svetlana is the general commander of the army. Once hailed as the hero of the Dinait Empire to the south, she now teaches fencing to Anastasia.

Eleanora:

Anastasia's personal attendant at her royal villa. She's the head lady-in-waiting who works on all sorts of things when Anastasia isn't around.

The arch-lord of Tindalos, Mh'ithrha:

AKA Pup Lord. Despite the nickname, this lord isn't cute whatsoever. He's not even a dog; he just sort of seems like one. The boss of the Hounds of Tindalos.

RESIDENTS (ABOVE GROUND)

Meghan:

Anastasia's Alchemy teacher. She teaches her about things like cores and recipes. Meghan is quite old.

Luciana

Archbishop of the church in Starting Town. Roughly the same age as Meghan.

CHAPTER 1

HOUSING

I'M CURRENTLY in Belstead.

I'll start off by depositing the reward money I earned from defeating the PK group. I received 50,000 gold from each player and 300,000 from the game system. The players also had some gold on them at the time. It all makes for a delicious bit of casual income. I deposit it at the adventurers' union and decide to post information about Return on the BBS's magic board as well.

Starting Town, the second area to the east, and Belstead are already lower-ranking places now, so I teleport to Barberek, a town in the third area to the east.

As usual, there doesn't appear to be many players around in the east. I'm in the third area too, which is all the more reason for them to be scarce.

Oh my... That player over there is the captain of the Mobile Unit, isn't he? I spotted him right away, since he's leading a wyvern around.

"Oh! Hello, Princess. Did you change up your look?" he greets me.

"Good day. I adjusted my hair a bit, since my equipment changed when I evolved."

"I see. It suits you."

"Thank you for saying so. You know, I don't think I've ever seen a tamer in the east before."

"I'm glad to have him," he says, indicating to the wyvern, "but now I'm in a bit of a bind."

"With feeding it?"

"Yeah. As you can see, he's really big, so he eats a whole lot. Since he's a carnivore, I figured I should come to the east."

"That's true. This is the best farming spot for raw meat drops."

"So anyway, I just figured that it's faster to feed him things whole without dismantling them first."

I see. Since it's possible to absorb corpses whole, it figures the wyvern would be able to eat it the same way.

I'll likely have more opportunities in the future to see different types of tamers if I linger around here.

It also appears that the devs decided to pixelate the animation of wyverns eating a corpse whole. They must have considered it too disturbing.

"This also turned out to be a great place for level grinding. But anyway, I'm gonna get going."

"Have fun out there," I respond.

I see the tamer off, summon Unit One as a wyvern, and then fly to the south. The high-level enemies will kill me if they manage to surround me here, so I dismount again once I'm at the entrance to the forest.

I have to swap out my wyvern for a different servant in the forest itself. I'll go with a skeleton, living armor, and two owls. My wolf has an additional two arms on its back, which hikes the cost...but the wolf's speed is appealing.

While I'm leveling up, I'll use the opportunity to absorb enemies and increase my capacity too. I'll be facing trolls and ogres, so the rewards are sure to be juicy. Their drops are garbage anyway, so absorbing them is my best bet.

I spot a troll barbarian. With the change of area, the enemies here are stronger, so I see he has a two-handed axe, which is an upgrade from the creature's usual weapon of a log. That probably means this one's attack power is higher. There aren't any other enemies around, so I'll get right down to business.

I have the living armor wait on standby in order to become the troll's secondary target.

I order one owl to keep its attacks to a minimum and focus on surveying our surroundings. This fight will be my way of practicing my new attack stances and leveling up my close-combat skills at the same time.

I shoot Dark Lance at the barbarian, which takes out about 30 percent of his health. Maybe that's just the normal amount at this enemy's level...? I dismiss the idea. Dark Lance would be a powerful attack against an animal enemy with lots of HP and no buffs on it.

It runs at me, holding its two-handed axe aloft and jumping to land a hit, which I dodge. The barbarian hits the ground instead. I use that moment to change my blade's element to Death and slash backward into it. Then I cast Bind and Regenerate, aiming for its weak point and hitting the troll six consecutive times.

Ah, and now it's dead. This won't help me learn fighting stances at all. It's helpful for leveling up, but I'll have to leave this combination for another day. Normally, a certain death combo would be all I needed, but since Unparalleled Style has no semi-auto function, I have no choice but to get some practice in. I can also get some delicious capacity out of it, so I should search for my next target.

It appears that the enemies here are exactly as they were described on the BBS. Troll barbarians and crushers; plus ogre soldiers, grapplers, guards, and thieves. The thieves go for surprise attacks, so that's the one thing I need to watch out for.

Trolls have a high rate of self-regeneration, which makes them a tricky enemy if you're low on firepower, but that's not a problem for me. They're more of a headache than a real problem. However, ogres are actually strong. Their attacks aren't based on strategy but on sheer power. They bulldoze you with the strength of their bodies alone.

The problem is that the enemies are finally starting to use active arts. Barbarians use Two-Handed Axe, crushers use Two-Handed Hammer, soldiers use Two-Handed Sword, grapplers use Hand-to-Hand, guards use One-Handed Hammer and Large Shield, and thieves use Dagger. They all use their respective arts to attack me.

But the easy part of fighting them is that they don't link up together. Only having to face off against close-range attacks could be called an advantage. In other words, these battles are meant for solo players. That said, because the enemies themselves are strong, the base EXP you receive doesn't seem as appealing. Then again, my goal is to level up my skills, so that doesn't bother me personally.

"Unit One, get its attention."

I make my living armor servant take on the enemy who's come as a reinforcement. I use the distraction to change positions with Unit One, and after defeating the enemy I'd already confined with Bind, I pierce its weak point with one of my arts.

We should be all right for now. If a third or fourth enemy shows up, I'll make my owls stay in the air and attack from above. This is an easy hunting ground for flying players, I'm sure. Though, judging by my slow progress, it wouldn't be my first option for grinding levels.

Looking at my servants, I can't help but notice that some forms are able to use equipment and some aren't. Using customization to give them arms and such makes this possible, but the problem is the cost.

I also wonder why we can't summon servants with spirit bodies. The absorption method alone allows me to gain zombie and skeleton bodies, but I don't know if spirit bodies don't exist in the first place or if I'm just missing something. I would think that magic attacks are better suited for spirit bodies instead of owls.

Has it really only been two months since the start of the game? We're still only in the third area of the map so far and have barely reached unexplored land at all. There's so much left to do.

I've just received an equipment upgrade, so the next one is probably far off. My servants need steel equipment, right? Even if I skip high-speed cobalt, I don't think the next grade up has been discovered yet. If molybdenum and vanadium come from the mines of the third area, I'll probably have to dig pretty far down to find anything better than those.

For now, I think I'll aim to unlock the other parts of the third area aside from the east. All that's confirmed so far is Fellforge to the northeast, Bellafonte to the northwest, and the ocean to the south. The west is still unknown.

With my priorities being Alchemy and new equipment, I should head to either the northeast or northwest.

Unparalleled Style doesn't seem like the type of skill that I can level up easily, so I'll prioritize raising Magic Catalyst. That one will level up quite quickly, being a first-tier skill, so I think I'll use my login bonuses for skill leveling too. They can only be used

for a certain time period, so I can just retreat once the effect wears off. Until then, I'll focus on fighting.

All right. Time to get killing.

Magic Catalyst has reached level 10. You have gained 1 skill point.

You have acquired the art Material Barrier through Magic Catalyst.

Darkness Magic has reached level 30. You have gained 2 skill points.

You have acquired the art Nox Ray through Darkness Magic.

Magic Catalyst has reached level 15.

You have acquired the art Magical Break through Magic Catalyst.

Shadow Magic has reached level 5.

You have acquired Shadow Fang through Shadow Magic.

Phew... The bonus has worn off now, and it looks like I've gained a few things.

Unparalleled Style: Blade and Space Recognition Expansion don't seem to have any arts. I assume those two skills gain improved effects as you raise their levels.

MATERIAL BARRIER:

Deploy a shield in front of you that blocks physical attacks.

NOX RAY:

Launches a penetrating laser beam of darkness.

MAGICAL BREAK:

Destroy spells fired your way by striking them with your magic catalyst.

SHADOW FANG:

Agito, the wolf, will strike from the shadows.

Hmm...I can't see myself using very many of these.

The ray attacks don't seem worth using unless the enemies are assembled in a straight line. Explosion attacks are much easier to use. I have to avoid becoming my own collateral damage when I use them, but I've had enough practice to be able to use them as one of my staples.

Pure magic users like Mr. Skelly would probably use Material Barrier and Magical Break, but they have less value to someone like me, who has Parry and Reflection. I doubt you can use them to counter explosion spells either.

Shadow Fang does seem like something I can use, as it activates not from my location but from the shadows near my target. The ability to use surprise attacks isn't so bad. But one potential problem is the position of the light source causing changes in the attack's direction. Still, those shadows should generally appear underfoot, which makes the attack still sound worth it to me.

Well, it's not unusual to be given moves that some people won't use, based on their personal builds and fighting styles. All it does is add more options to choose from, and it's not as if I have to use absolutely everything.

I head to my home with Return and recall my servants. As I relax in my personal room,

I take a look at the housing menu.

There are roughly three varieties of kitchens alone. On top of that, there are bonuses that give buffs and boost food quality. I even see sets for each housing version. Collecting all of these will take quite a lot of money.

[FURNITURE] COOKING BOX

Rarity: LE Quality: C Price: 1,000,000

This box allows you to store cooking ingredients in your home.

Infinite storage.

If I had to pick one, this would be it. One million gold is a lot, but infinite storage, if only just for cooking ingredients, would be much appreciated.

There are also three options for Alchemy. This has an infinite storage system too, but I'd only be able to store what I produce, not the ingredients. That's probably because there are simply too many materials that can be used in Alchemy.

[FURNITURE] CHEMICAL ROOM

Rarity: LE Quality: C

Price: Remodel: 700,000 / Additional Room: 1,300,000

Carves an Alchemy circle into an existing or new room to bestow you with blessings.

Alchemy quality: Great

[FURNITURE] CHEMICAL SHELF

Rarity: LE Quality: C Price: 1,000,000

This Alchemy shelf will take up one wall of the room in order to store the fruits of your craft.

Infinite storage.

Adding a new room purely for chemistry would get expensive, but since I live in a royal villa with plenty of spare rooms, this ends up being my most economical option.

It looks like the Chemical Room remodel and Chemical Shelf cost 1,700,000 gold altogether... That adds up to about half of my total gold. It's also normal in MMOs for storage to cost more than entire rooms and such. Databases don't come free.

Akirina has arrived for a visit.

Oh, Rina's here? I'll have her come to me.

“Howdy, Sis!”

“Welcome to my place. Although it’s pretty empty at the moment.”

“Are you planning to remodel?”

“I’m looking over the options right now... Oh? Ha ha! You should see this.”

“What?! What?!”

I make the window visible so Rina can look at it too.

[FURNITURE] WILD MAGIC SILKWORMS

Rarity: EP Quality: C Price: 400,000

You risked your life to break their traps and capture wild magic silkworms.

The silkworms produce and weave threads that are highly compatible with magical energy.

These threads are called wild mana silk and are treasured by the upper echelons of society.

The part that looks like a cocoon is actually a combined house and trap of their own making. But starting today, these little jerks are camping outdoors.

“Oh no! My house!”

[FURNITURE] DOMESTICATED MAGIC SILKWORMS

Rarity: LE Quality: C Price: 800,000

You've managed to tame the wild magic silkworms. Look at you go!

Their threads are called royal mana silk.

It is bright and glossy in quality. Even wearing a small accessory made from this highly valuable silk will turn you into an object of admiration.

“I'll trade you for some food! How thick do you want the thread?”

“Such elaborate flavor text,” I remark.

“But it sounds like you can harvest silk with these...”

“Did Mr. Dentelle talk about this? There's probably some requirement to find these like I did.”

“Like your room needing to be over a certain size?”

[FURNITURE] MAGIC SILKWORM CULTIVATION BOX

Rarity: NO Quality: C Price: 300,000

This box is used to cultivate the types of magic silkworms that produce magic thread.

[FURNITURE] MAGIC SILKWORM CULTIVATION HOUSE

Rarity: LE Quality: C

Price: Remodel: 500,000 / Additional Room: 900,000

This room is used to cultivate types of magic silkworms that produce magic thread.

“There’s a box you can keep these in. I bet it makes the size of the room irrelevant,” says Rina.

Indeed, I expect she’s right. I wonder if the prime minister would be able to confirm.

Wait, hang on... Shouldn’t I ask one of my ladies-in-waiting before the prime minister? They’re not moving or speaking at all, but they’re on standby right here.

“Do you know about magic silkworms?” I ask one of them.

“Of course. They enjoy soil rich in mana. To be more specific, they die without enough mana.”

“What is the definition of ‘mana’?”

“Mana is magical energy that hangs in the air. You can think of magical energy as its

individual, separated form. I'm unsure if it's the same above ground."

"I see. I understand now."

The answer probably lies in the degree of mana concentration. This seems very important.

"Mr. Dentelle is probably at a loss. The game is telling us to build houses where the mana is rich, right?" I ask.

"That's a real pain, making you go that far. I get that they want us to be sure the environment's right... Ah, I see. Here it is," says Rina.

[FURNITURE] MANA CONCENTRATION AMPLIFICATION FORCE FIELD

Rarity: LE Quality: C Price: 3,000,000

This allows you to place a force field that covers the soil, artificially inflating the mana concentration on the inner side.

This is mainly used in cultivating valuable plants that contain magical energy.

"I see. Dang, it's expensive! Three million gold...?" Rina reacts.

"I wonder if this thing needs magic stones or magical energy in reserve to maintain the force field?"

"Maybe it'll cost less to maintain when you harvest what's in the soil?"

"But what's the use in soil that only has a concentration lower than what you need to maintain the force field...?"

"Hmm... Ah, it probably wants you to use this thing."

[FURNITURE] MAGICAL ENERGY DIFFUSION DEVICE

Rarity: LE Quality: C Price: 2,000,000

This magic tool absorbs magical energy from things such as your own personal energy or magic stones, diffusing it out to its surroundings.

This item is commonly used with the Mana Concentration Amplification Force Field.

“The whole set costs five million...”

“So that’s why the magical energy items are so expensive.”

The magical energy hearth used in blacksmithing is also quite pricey... I must be able to choose objects without needing a force field because the concentration in the Nether is high. Mr. Dentelle probably has money, so I’ll pass along the information to him.

“Are you getting the kitchen, Sis?”

“I’ve heard there’s been an increase in chefs around the place, so I think I’ll start with an Alchemy room instead.”

“Ah, true. They’ve been multiplying ever since the event.”

Judging by the cooking board online, they’ve even managed to beat me in terms of skill level. That makes sense, seeing as how my main focus is combat.

Plus, since I have a teacher now, I want to focus my efforts on the game’s Alchemy system. In all honesty, it works out just fine for me.

I think I’ll turn one of my rooms on the first floor into a chemical room and install a chemical shelf in it. Farewell, 1.7 million gold! May we meet again.

As soon as it’s done, my sister and I take a look at it. I can tell it’s changed completely. That’s a video game for you, all right.

“Wow... It’s like a fantasy world...”

There are some magic circles engraved on not only the walls but the floor and ceiling too. They’re glowing slightly, with the rays of light converging on the Alchemy desk in the center.

In other words, this whole thing must be one giant magic circle. Now I see why this gives you a boost in product quality.

“What else do I want...? I think I’d like an ore vein.”

[FURNITURE] MINI ORE VEIN

Rarity: RA Quality: C Price: 500,000

This small alchemical ore setup absorbs surrounding mana and synthesizes it to produce ores and gems.

You can’t mine from it all that many times, nor can you mine any big loot, but it does replenish quickly.

[FURNITURE] ORE VEIN

Rarity: EP Quality: C Price: 1,000,000

This alchemical ore setup absorbs surrounding mana and synthesizes it to produce ores and gems.

You can mine from it an average amount of times and receive some acceptably fine loot.

[FURNITURE] LARGE ORE VEIN

Rarity: LE Quality: C Price: 1,500,000

This large alchemical ore setup absorbs surrounding mana and synthesizes it to produce ores and gems.

You can mine from it many times, while drop rarity depends on the homeowner's base level.

"I see. That sounds nice! You can probably mine right away, and if you're buying one, you may as well go with the large vein," Rina remarks.

"All that money I saved up from cooking is down to 620,000..."

"How much did you spend today?"

"Um... I think it was around 3.2 million."

"That's housing for you. There's no mercy."

Let's see... I'll place this in the backyard to make sure it doesn't mess with the aesthetic of the house. The front yard has my pond and crystal lotus flowers, so I'll put the ore vein in the back with my fields.

When we see it in person, though...

"It says it's an ore vein, but it's actually a mining mountain?" asks Rina.

"I assume the mountain will shrink the more it's mined. I guess I'll have to mine to find out."

Clang, clang, clang, clang... Clang, clang, clang, clang... Hang on. It seems like I'm not mining anything at all.

"Uh, Sis, what's your Mining level at?"

"Um... Oh, it went up. It's at 9!"

"You probably want to level it up a bit more."

"Good point..."

I'd started with basically nothing... It would be depressing if my 1.5 million gold mining setup turned out to be useless, so I should indeed focus on leveling up Mining. The three skills related to gathering all have their respective tools lose durability at different rates depending on the skill levels. Those skill levels are also said to give a bonus to the number of materials gathered.

I'm starting to feel like I should have saved my skill EXP ticket for this.

"Oh? Magi iron... It's iron ore with magical energy inside it."

"Wow! I don't think that's been discovered yet," exclaims Rina.

"Really? I should post it on the blacksmithing board on the BBS."

"They'll love that."

I post a screenshot on the forum and return to chipping away at the vein.

I come up with black ferrum, molybdenum, vanadium, and occasionally magi iron. There are also some gems. Almandine, lapis lazuli, amber, nephrite, celestite, and hematite—six differently colored unpolished gems of each element. Their sizes are mostly small, with the occasional medium gem.

I managed to mine twenty times, but one of my two pickaxes broke in the process, and the other is barely hanging on.

"The further you are from the recommended level with gathering skills, the more damage your tools take," Rina remarks.

"I don't know if I would have been able to do this much if these hadn't been made by Mr. Ertz."

"Still, you got a lot out of it. Was information about each of these gems already out there?"

"I thought gems were currently part of Handicraft."

"They could be used for accessories with Handicraft, or maybe even for staves with Woodworking."

“I have a lot of accessory slots open, but I already spent so much money...”

Black ferrum and molybdenum don’t have many Alchemy recipes, but I bet I could sell these. I’ll take them to Mr. Ertz and get some money out of them.

“Do you have any medium-sized magic stones?” I ask Rina.

“I dunno which ones are medium.”

“I believe it has to do with the size of the enemy that drops them. Was there a medium-sized enemy who dropped stones?”

“What about skeletons?” Rina asks me.

“They’re small-sized. Angus and horses are medium-sized, though...”

“But they don’t drop magic stones.”

“Oh well. I’ll just have to test it out with orbs.”

I take my sister to the Alchemy room and have her stand back. Looking around, it appears I do have a place to set up my expansion cores. I’ll add them now.

I start by using Extraction Choice on four magi iron ores to turn them into magi iron ingots. My Alchemist level is still low, so while it’s quite a struggle, I manage to get the job done.

Then I use Disassembly to process the small, unpolished gems I mined earlier. This takes away the excess dirt and such. Now that I understand how it works, I’ll process the medium-sized gems, since they’re more important.

The prep work is done. Time to get down to business.

I place a magi iron ingot, orb, and medium almandine in the magic circle. Finally, it’s time for Synthesize.



"Whoa! Your hair and skirt are getting blown back in a mysterious wind, just like in an anime!"

"Th-this is my newfound power... No, this isn't the time to be saying cheesy lines like that."

"I'm watching my own sister lose her HP."

"Was the orb a bad idea?"

"Yikes...I'm starting to take damage too! Damn these crazy alchemists..."

It's draining my magical energy in real time. I need to slow this down as much as I can and bring the synthesizing to an end.

Between the health restoration from our magic defense stats and the safe zone we're in, we probably won't die, but this is still a waste. I don't think I can cut off the flow completely, so I'll have to try to control and compress it as much as I can.

[MATERIAL] ALMANDINE MAGI IRON

Rarity: RA Quality: B-

This ingot is a metal with a high magic aptitude. It's now been enchanted with an element.

Being able to craft such an item surely qualifies you as a skilled alchemist.

This metal can be turned into weapons with elemental attacks or armor with elemental resistances.

Attribute: Fire

I didn't exactly fail, but considering that my Alchemy modifiers resulted in the quality being doubled, I can tell that it's worthless in terms of base quality. I'm not even sure it would have reached C quality without those modifiers.

“Whoa... You’ve finally obtained elemental metal!” Rina cried.

“I’ll have to test it out in a few ways, but right now, it sounds like I can use it to craft elemental equipment.”

I need to combine an ingot with a high magic aptitude, a magic stone of medium size or higher, and a gem of medium size or higher. How each piece influences the final product has yet to be investigated. If I want to narrow this down, I’ll have to have Mr. Ertz lend a hand.

“I don’t think I can craft weapons with just one ingot,” I say.

“Other metals won’t work?”

“It says that magical energy aptitude is a requirement, so I think magi iron is the lowest possible metal you can use.”

“I see.”

For now, I need to level up Mining and Alchemist if I want to get anywhere with this. I also need to buy pickaxes from Mr. Ertz, as well as storage for ores. I’ll wrap up today by buying pickaxes and work on clearing the third area in the north tomorrow.

Now I’ll make magic clay out of water of reminiscence, pure dirt, and orbs.

“Sis, I know you’re really hard at work on that, but aren’t you gonna die if your health keeps draining?” Rina asks me.

“Heal me, please!”

“But I only have Light and Holy magic...”

“Oh... Oh. That reminds me. I’m not weak to Light magic anymore, so I think you’re safe to use Light Heal. But Holy magic still hurts me.”

“For real? *Light Heal.*”

Alchemist has reached level 20. You have gained 1 skill point.

You have acquired the art Temporary Repair through Alchemist.

With Rina healing me, I manage to complete my work.

[MATERIAL] MAGIC CLAY

Rarity: EP Quality: C+

This all-purpose clay has a very high magical energy aptitude.

As for how it's made...the components are pretty rare.

This is the best material for making dolls.

“What poor item quality. This must be even more difficult to craft than elemental metals,” I conclude.

“It looked like you could just barely survive that, even without my healing.”

“That makes me wonder... If I make the room dark, will I be able to craft with my stat bonuses? That might make things a bit easier.”

“Does brightness affect bonuses?”

“It seems like darker is better. I think it might be best to craft in a dark room when I’m alone.”

All right. As for that art I learned, I think I get the gist of it based on the name alone...

TEMPORARY REPAIR

Restores durability of equipment. Requires use of equipment's primary material.

Well, that makes sense. I don't know if I'll use it or not, but it's better to have it either way.

Today, I'll work on Alchemist and buy pickaxes from Mr. Ertz before I go to bed. While I'm in the area, I should tell Mr. Dentelle about magic silkworms and Ms. Salute about the witches my teacher told me about.

Now it's time to mass-produce some magic clay. It will just about kill me, but the materials are easy to obtain and the EXP is a delicious bonus.

OFFICIAL BBS 1

[It's almost] Chatting Thread 61 [September]

1. Resting Adventurer

This thread is for general chatting. Please write whatever you want, but keep the rules in mind, or you'll have Management breathing down your neck. Seriously. The entire thread might be deleted. Please cut me some slack.

Past threads: http://*****

>> 980 Open a new thread, please.

543. Resting Adventurer

Farewell, summer vacation!

544. Resting Adventurer

I still have a few vacation days remaining. I've still got time.

545. Resting Adventurer

Oh? I haven't seen the princess in a long time, but she changed her look!

546. Resting Adventurer

Now she looks more like a princess. Looks like she finally realizes what we see in her.

547. Resting Adventurer

I know her equipment changed, but is it just me, or is she carrying some scary-looking key?

548. Resting Adventurer

I know what you mean! I feel like I've seen that key before somewhere...

549. Resting Adventurer

That new book she has on her belt also makes me nervous.

550. Resting Adventurer

What happened to her rapier?

551. Resting Adventurer

No clue.

552. Resting Adventurer

It would probably be faster to go look on her personal board.

553. Resting Adventurer

I guess that's one option.

554. Resting Adventurer

Actually, not even her board has information about her equipment.

555. Resting Adventurer

Yeah, because of the PKers. Nothing you can do about that.

556. Resting Adventurer

Is Princess teleporting without using statues?

557. Resting Adventurer

I think so?

558. Resting Adventurer

So that key really *is* the Silver Key...

559. Resting Adventurer

What's the Silver Key?

560. Resting Adventurer

It's an item from the Cthulhu mythos. It lets you manipulate time and space however you want.

561. Resting Adventurer

And she teleports with that...? That's so OP.

562. Resting Adventurer

It's an item you need in order to have an audience with Yog-Sothoth, so can you meet with Stellura too? I guess you have to ask her if you wanna find out how this game handles the key.

563. Resting Adventurer

The book had an awesome animation too. I'm really curious about this.

564. Resting Adventurer

Do you think she's supposed to go off the official routes to go treasure hunting in unexplored territory?

565. Resting Adventurer

Where are those dungeons?

566. Resting Adventurer

Yeah, where are they? Residents, can't you tell us already?

826. Resting Adventurer

Princess posted information about Space Magic on the magic board. I really want it...

827. Resting Adventurer

“Return,” huh...? I want it, but what about Light and Dark...?

828. Resting Adventurer

It looks like the ultimate combination of Light and Dark magic.

829. Resting Adventurer

*It only looks that way.

830. Resting Adventurer

That's depressing.

831. Resting Adventurer

Right now, you can't even use different spells at the same time, much less different elements.

832. Resting Adventurer

I heard you can do a multi-lock.

833. Resting Adventurer

What? For real?

834. Resting Adventurer

Go look at the magic board.

835. Resting Adventurer

Seriously? Okay, I'll go check now.

836. Resting Adventurer

What's a "multi-lock"?

837. Resting Adventurer

Multiple lock-ons where you choose more than one target. Apparently, once you practice, you can use Dual Spell to aim for another enemy.

838. Resting Adventurer

Whoa... I guess I should give it a try. I'll go take a look.

839. Resting Adventurer

It's a must-have if you use spells.

840. Resting Adventurer

Take a look at this pic. This is more important.

http://*****

841. Resting Adventurer

Is that an obanyaki?

842. Resting Adventurer

Imagawayaki?

843. Resting Adventurer

>>842 Huh?

844. Resting Adventurer

>>841 Huh?

845. Resting Adventurer

>>841-842 It's clearly kaitenyaki.

846. Resting adventurer

>>845 No, it's nijuyaki.

847. Resting Adventurer

>>846 No way. That's oyaki.

848. Resting Adventurer

What the hell do we do about this? By the way, it's gozasoro.

849. Resting Adventurer

That's enough! I only wanted to show you the pretty things I baked! Don't fight over me!

850. Resting Adventurer

>>Shut up already!

851. Resting Adventurer

>>849 You wanna try that again?

852. Resting Adventurer

By the way, what filling did you use?

853. Resting Adventurer

Honey.

854. Resting Adventurer

LOL.

855. Resting Adventurer

Really? Honey?

856. Resting Adventurer

You've gotta make it with red bean paste.

857. Resting Adventurer

Hey, here's a fun fact! Putting a stake through a vampire's heart kills it.

858. Resting Adventurer

Where did that come from?

859. Resting Adventurer

* It also kills most other living beings.

860. Resting Adventurer

That's for sure.

CHAPTER 2

FRIDAY—MORNING

I WAKE UP IN THE MORNING and lazily don my VR headset. My first stop is the trader's union.

Judging by consignment sales, water of reminiscence is already out on the market. Dying with a container in your inventory allows you to scoop up the water and make a bit of money when you return to the world of the living with it. It's easy to acquire; however, it looks like the only players with a need for it are the ones who use Compounding and Cooking.

Items from the Nether will probably fetch a better price by selling them to residents, not players. Although, I'm sure the people who've figured that out already are keeping it to themselves.

I also now know that, unlike the corners of the Nether where players can visit, my home—the area around the Evernight Castle—is a place where you can harvest items that are even higher in quality.

C-quality products are already circulating, but as far as higher qualities go, I might need to enlist the help of the other undead who cleared the trial event in the Nether.

I also see quite a few cooking-related items on the market. I don't think I'd have been able to profit as much as I did before. Now I'm certain that shifting my focus to Alchemy is the best idea.

I've seen what I need to see, so I hand off the products I made yesterday to be sold on consignment and log out for now.

I finish up breakfast and my other morning activities before logging back in again.

“Ah! It’s Tasha!”

"Good day, Abby," I reply.

"Good day indeed! I saw that really expensive magic clay!"

"Did you buy it?"

"Not yet!"

"I want to make higher-quality clay, so I'd recommend waiting a little longer."

Producing C+ clay in an environment like that was just too sad, so at the very least, I want to bump that up to B-tier, or maybe even A-tier if possible.

But it's not just Alchemy that affects its outcome. I probably need Magic Assist skills to help me too, as that's what Magia Control falls under.

I chat with Abby for a bit. She certainly seems to be enjoying herself. Ms. Dory is with her, so I doubt she has anything to fear.

I see her off before using my Silver Key to teleport to Welshtead in the north. Then I head straight north until I reach a fork in the road, the right side of which leads to a town. The area map tells me that going diagonally from there will take me to area 3-2 in the northeast. To the left is the road that leads northwest to Bellafonte. The area numbering goes clockwise, so that would be 3-16.

It looks like there are towns that surround 2-2, the area with the abandoned temple, but since it's pretty hard to just press forward to that part of the map, I have to go diagonally around it. Anywhere with roads indicates an official route.

I summon a wyvern and follow the road from above. Fortunately, the lack of flying enemies here makes it nice and safe. I want to get to the third area quickly now.

As always, the colors of the scenery are mostly brown instead of green. There also seem to be lots of gentle bumps and dips in the terrain. I'm sure carriages struggle in this place.

But that didn't matter to me, since I travel via servants such as my wyvern. They have no concept of stamina, so they never get tired.

Anyway, I think it's about time I got serious and had a saddle made for me. I can

manage to get by with Horseback skills, but it will be a lot easier with the proper tools. I'll have to ask Mr. Dentelle once he logs in.

I arrive at the third area. I have Unit One fly closer to the ground, since I don't want to engage in an aerial battle. There're some lumps of iron lumbering around on the ground below us. Of course, these are actually enemies. Otherwise, someone surely would have plucked them up and left with them already.

Iron tortoises and iron golems... It looks like golems are starting to become common now. Meanwhile, up in the sky are acid hawks. I'll have to keep going and pray they don't target me.

I can see a party fighting one of the golems... Wait, can you extract iron from them? I see them really swinging their pickaxes down there.

I go to the BBS and do a search for "iron golems." Hmm...it says that attacking golems with pickaxes drops a fixed number of iron ingots, while taking out a tortoise drops iron ore.

So you can mine some iron as you battle, huh? Steel requires iron and high-speed cobalt requires steel, so iron gets used up quite fast. Getting it off monsters is a nice option, since you can make a bit of cash off it. You don't need Mining skills either, apparently.

I watch the players battle as I head straight for the town square ahead. I arrive and unlock its statue portal.

The portal to Fellforge has been opened.

You can set this location as your respawn point.

That would be a no, of course.

But now I can teleport here, so I'll get right to—no, first I need to buy storage items. I head to a shop and see that they have extra-large mineral and gem storage items, so I take 120,000 gold out of the union to buy them. Now my savings are down to 500,000

gold. I really need to make some money.

I ask the shopkeeper about the nearest mining mountain, and then it's off to the mines.

There are holes in the mountain for people to mine ore. Or, in other words, mine shafts. The residents have already mined the shafts meant for players to use, meaning they were abandoned locations with no one to mine them.

They are almost certainly regulated, seeing as how things like iron are a necessity for the kingdom. If a particular tunnel stops being profitable, they abandon it. In other words, part of the game's story is that mining as a whole town doesn't reap many benefits, but individuals can use these areas and still get something out of it. Of course, monsters probably live in these mines, and it's pitch black too. We are welcome to use their mines, but we do so at our own risk.

Now that the mine shafts aren't being managed, there probably *are* some monsters who've taken up residence inside. Plus, tunnel lights aren't free, so of course they've removed them. That all makes perfect sense to me. Adventurers, including us players, are coming to mine here, so it's not as if the tunnels are overwhelmed with monsters. The town can rest at ease in that matter.

Setting aside the topic of in-game backstory, my night vision means I don't need any light source to work with. In fact, dark areas heighten my stats, so I'm heading to this mine shaft with only a pickaxe and little else in the way of preparations.

This is still a game, however, so there are a decent number of spots to mine at.

Clang, clang, clang. The sound echoes through the tunnel as I mine, sending ore tumbling to my feet. My servant worker then picks them up for me. It would be annoying to have to pick up each piece myself, so this is most convenient indeed.



With me are a living armor, wolf, and worker. If any enemies show up, I can have my worker mine while I fight, but I'll do the mining myself if we're not in any danger. It's not like I have anything better to do.

Once I'm done mining, I take the ores for myself, since I forgot to equip my worker with any sort of bag. I'll have to have one made along with that saddle. But will I even have enough money?

The bronze pickaxe I nearly destroyed with yesterday's ore vein is finally starting to break, so I switch to the new steel pickaxe I bought.

I don't seem to be finding anything other than molybdenum and vanadium. Where is that magi iron, exactly? Since I haven't seen it yet, it just must not appear in the shallow sections. Well, hmm... Magi iron is iron with magical energy in it, right? Isn't it possible that it's just iron ore that's been affected by mana density? If that's the case, then I might not find it in this mountain at all.

Unfortunately, I'm just here to raise my Mining skills, so I'll have to go without magi iron for now.

Just then, enemies approach us. There's a goblin miner—equipped with a helmet and pickaxe—and a goblin bomber carrying round bombs. I leave the miner to my servants and take on the bomber myself.

The worker can take over my mining. The two of us share my production and gathering skills, so the EXP he gains is linked up to me. It's a nice advantage.

I shoot at the bomber with a spell and get it to target me. Unit One lures in the miner by using Appeal.

Naturally, I reflect any bomb that comes flying at me in an arc. I want to aim for a direct or nearby impact with the reflected bombs. Regardless of the exact position, they explode upon landing. In other words, they just need the shock of an impact. It also seems like these bombs deal AoE damage with a rather small radius, and dropping them at point-blank range hits harder. It goes without saying that direct impacts deal the most damage.

Meanwhile, I watch on as the goblin miner is restricted by Bind and my servants beat it to a pulp. Then I absorb the bomber with Secret Art of Necromancy. It looks like the miner is dead now, so I'll absorb that one too.

Finally, I retrieve the ores from my worker and head to the next area. I see a few spots that can be mined, so I send my worker and living armor to mine in one place while my wolf and I mine at another. I wouldn't say efficiency is the only thing that matters, but when possible, it's important to make the operation run smoother, especially if it doesn't come with any added risk to us.

We're definitely safe, seeing as how the areas close to the entrance only appear to have goblin miners and bombers. They may be level 30 and above, but since they're not ruling-class enemies, goblins are simply goblins.

My goal is to continue mining as I move deeper and deeper into the tunnel.

Hmm... My skills just keep going up. This is going great, so long as I ignore my pickaxes breaking. I'm only going to go through more and more, so I may as well keep mining.

Oh look, it's silver. Oh, and there's some gold. This area must have the ores that are best sold for cold hard cash. I'd imagine selling them to residents will earn the most profits. Since I spent all my savings on housing items, that's exactly what I'll do.

I might've been able to earn gold by selling monster drops, but instead, I absorb every enemy I defeat. Capacity is important too. I definitely want to be able to summon servants at multipliers. Unfortunately, miners and bombers are normal goblin sizes, so I only gain 3 capacity for each. That's a bit depressing. Then again, goblin drops aren't really worth it anyway, so it's better to just absorb them in the end.

I'm clanging away at the wall when Unit Two, the wolf, switches into his battle stance. Unit One, the living armor, joins him. I switch to my athame and look around for the enemy while the worker continues to mine.

Ah, there it is. A murder mantis—a black praying mantis that sneaks toward you silently, aiming to claim your head. Its stealthy nature means that, if a player's attention is elsewhere, a mantis will be able to land an easy critical hit. Depending on the player's build, this could mean an instant death.

With Instinct and Danger Sense, my build means that I won't get hit with surprise attacks, but having low skill levels can still result in situations where you can't react in time, so I shouldn't rely on it *too* much. Things like Wild Instinct and Law of the Jungle are ways of strengthening those skills, though, so I'm not in any danger at this

very moment.

If you manage to prevent its first sneak attack, the murder mantis is really nothing more than a giant bug. I strike first with a spell and easily tear it to bits.

These enemies appear to come one at a time, so it's all about whether or not you can spot the mantis before it gets too close to you. If you master that part, they're nothing special. Honestly, they seem like they would be more of a nuisance if they were to show up while I fight other enemies.

After the mantis comes the plague mice. These appear to use weakening and poison attacks. They're not hard to beat, but unlike the mantis, the plague mice come in groups of four. This makes them the annoying type of enemies that don't damage you with bodily attacks but instead chip away at your health with status ailments. Your health doesn't drain as fast as it would with deadly poison, but the longer it affects you, the more intense the status ailment becomes, which could end up draining your health even faster in some cases.

The weakening ailment lowers all stats, after all. I feel like the game is telling us it's time to get serious about dealing with status ailments.

Of course, they don't apply to us undead. The only annoyance is how many of the plague mice you have to fight.

Oh, if it isn't a new ore.

[MATERIAL] HALCHIUM ORE

Rarity: RA Quality: C+

While this ore can produce lots of output, it's difficult to process and requires specific equipment.

However, it is commonly used as a replacement for adamantite, due to its comparative ease of processing and its toughness.

I see. So this is why people have been saying that adamant exists in the game. Halchium must be the lower-tier version of adamantite.

Just like the description says, halchium is easier to process than adamant and doesn't require any outlandish equipment. Between this and its rate of output, halchium is the ore that's more broadly used. It must be suited for mass production.

At the end of the day, though, all players care about is whether or not you can use it for equipment. Some speculate that halchium is even better to use than high-speed cobalt. The problem is that this ore doesn't exist in real life, meaning nothing is known about its alloys. I'm sure that blacksmiths will soon be beginning a process of trial and error with it.

Perhaps I should skip high-speed cobalt and go straight to halchium equipment for my servants. I also have the option of using elemental metal, but that raises the problem of quantity. I suppose I could sell my elemental metal to Mr. Ertz and buy halchium equipment.

For now, I'll continue to stay in this tunnel until lunchtime...or until my pickaxe falls apart.

I use Return to teleport back to my villa. In my backyard, my worker and I start mining the regenerated ore vein. It looks like this vein regenerates after two in-game days, or half of a real-life day. You can mine from it forty times in one real-life day.

Please no molybdenum or vanadium... Please no molybdenum or vanadium... Aww, vanadium! It figures. All I want is magi iron and gems. I can also mine for gems in Fellforge, so I wouldn't complain about magi iron alone.

Hmm... I actually got more magi iron from the tunnels than I expected. But I'm down to one pickaxe left now, so I need to buy some more while I'm out selling my goods.

All right. Before anything else, I'll log out and have lunch.

Cup ramen isn't a bad lunch from time to time. Hmm... I'll go with dandan noodles.

“Luuunch!” Rina cries.

“Pick one.”

“Instant noodles! What kinds are there?”

I haven’t had these in a while, but they’re actually pretty tasty. Well, if they weren’t tasty, they probably wouldn’t sell them in the first place.

“So, Sis, I heard some PKers came after you?”

“Did you see that PKer-Killer’s video?”

“Yeah.”

It must have come from the person who asked me if they could post it. I also heard it was posted on my personal thread online.

“You said that Light magic wasn’t a weakness for you anymore, but I didn’t know you could block explosion spells with burst spells,” Rina remarks.

“It sounds like you can block them so long as you’re using the opposite element. I tried it out because the prime minister of the Nether told me about it, and I think it helped.”

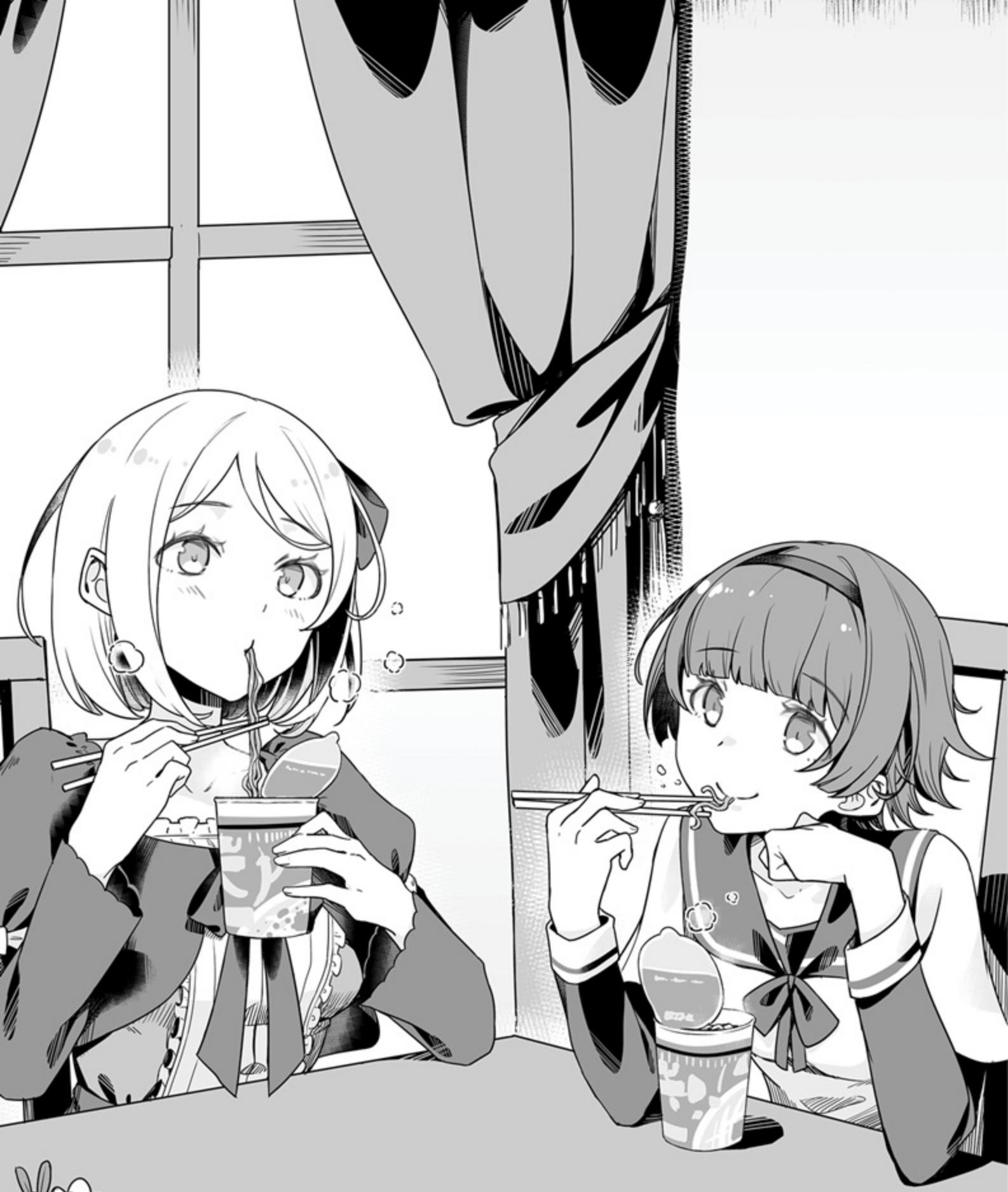
“Whoa! But I don’t think I’ll be able to use it very often.”

“Well, you have to do it in very specific circumstances.”

“True...”

Considering my race, it’s a given that others would attack me with Light spells. It’s much easier for me to simply prepare Dark Burst.

We slurp down our ramen and talk about the game. Having a shared interest is a good thing, wouldn’t you say?



“I noticed that your stances changed,” my sister said. “What’s that about?”

“It’s a very unique, rare skill.”

“Yeah? Tell me more!”

“Well... I suppose it’s fine if I do. I’m sure there’re many others to find too.”

I tell my sister that there are skills relating to different “schools.” Unparalleled Style came from the great hero Lana, which means it’s treated as a rare style, but I doubted that was the case for the school itself. They weren’t likely to only exist in the Nether, and I remember the text that referenced Unparalleled Style existing above ground as well, so there are probably different variations. I’m sure it’s okay to teach Rina about it. After all, I imagine these systems have their advantages and disadvantages for different people.

“So I just need to find some kind of dojo, become a student, and I’ll unlock rare skills?” asks Rina.

“I don’t know if they’ll be rare, but yeah, maybe if that dojo has its own school of fighting.”

There are probably conditions you must fulfill to become a student, but I don’t know the specifics.

“The arts are the different stances you can use. You have to move a certain way to trigger them, so you’ll have to memorize those movements. There’s no cooldown or anything like that, though,” I explain.

“I see... It sounds like an acquired taste, but I bet it’s fun.”

“Some schools are probably more advantageous for certain people. But you’ll have to look for a place to find them before anything else.”

“I wonder if there are events where you can storm another school’s dojo.”

“I’m not sure about that. The setting of this world makes me think coliseum fights would be more common than martial arts venues.”

“That sounds brutal!”

These fighting school skills are likely weak to Bind spells, which prevent you from performing the required movements. I also don't see how it would be possible to use a high-mobility fighting technique when the ground is hard to maneuver on.

I believe the only current countermeasure against bind spells is to level up your magic resistance. I should probably ask the prime minister or Lana once I log in to find out if this is true.

"Does your Light magic still deal 1× damage, Sis?"

"Yeah."

"But you used that against spells from four people, right? Didn't you cancel more than half of their spells with your bursts?"

"My equipment gives me magic defense and Spirit boosts. I think my Dark magic modifiers helped too."

"It sounds like you're already a raid boss, Sis."

"They failed because they used long-ranged attacks against me. I would die like anyone else if a group surrounded me and attacked at close range."

I have Mirror Style to handle any long-range attacks, so that's not too much of a problem for me. My equipment and stats also help my magic defense.

However, being cornered by first-wavers at close range would be the end for me. I might be able to stop one of them with a Bind, but then there'd be the other three to deal with. First-wavers should be strong enough to at least chip away at my health, and I suspect they could withstand at least one burst spell from me too.

Zombies have a lot of health, second only to living armor. But unlike living armor, we aren't weak to any specific weapons. We're also not resistant to any weapons either.

Living armor is weak against blunt attacks but strong against other attacks. Skeletons are weak against blunt attacks but strong against piercing attacks. Zombies take equal damage from everything, while our automatic regeneration modifiers are on the higher side, I believe.

Spirit body types are probably the strongest when it comes to fighting undead at close

range. They may have less health than others, but their ghostly bodies mean they have an advantage against all slashing, stabbing, and blunt attacks.

I'm a magic attacker—a role an off-tank could also have. However, I have no agility, so I can't fight by hitting and running, nor can I retreat.

"Ah, I see. Even if they fight me at close range, my aura will activate instant death if worse comes to worst," I remark.

"Did your aura get upgraded? It didn't deal instant death before, right?"

"It's because my Dark Aura became Clad in Death after I evolved. From what I've seen so far, it seems like it has a 5 percent chance of activating."

"Well, that sounds about right for an instant death attack. That's kind of high, in fact."

Having an instant death infliction rate too high would spoil the fun of the game, after all. Auras don't have cooldown timers either.

"That reminds me, Sis. You don't usually go to the north, do you?"

"I needed to raise my Mining level, prepare equipment for my servants, and make some money."

"Ah, that makes sense. You've got that ore vein now too."

"It also helps that my level's higher. I think I'll spend a few more days in the north."

"I need to change my weapons too... Should I wait for silk armor?"

"Weren't you going to get heavy armor?"

"That was the plan, but I think light armor might be nice too."

"What about leather?"

"I want to have a military-style dress made. I just need to reinforce parts of it, and that should make it count as light armor."

"Hmm... Ah, I see what you mean. Are you getting a cloak too?"

“Duh!”

So she's going with a military-style outfit instead of knightly armor, huh? Her Agility stat is most likely the reason since she plays in a hit-and-run attack style.

A military-style dress and a halberd doesn't sound too bad a combination to me. I'll bet she chose the cloak because it looks cool. Then again, resident adventurers supposedly see cloaks as a necessary item to have. They function as both bedding for outdoor camping and protection from the rain.

Players rarely camp outdoors, except for things like the recent camping event.

“All right. Time to game!”

I watch my sister clean up her lunch before running to her room to play. I idle for a while before joining her.

Mr. Ertz probably isn't online yet, so I'll start by asking the prime minister and Lana about fighting back against Bind spells.

OFFICIAL BBS 2

[Everyone loves] Princess Thread [Princess]

1. Princess Watchman

This is a thread exclusively for talking about Ms. Anastasia, the player.

Please don't write anything creepy here. There's a chance she might see it.

Although, I'm sure Management will get rid of you quickly enough.

Now, let's discuss Princess.

She's the real-life big sister of the halberd-using Akirina. Both sisters are gorgeous.

She's currently an extra race from the zombie evolution called "Immortal Princess."

That unique dress of hers is extra equipment, and it doesn't drop if she's killed by a player.

She has a lot of fans, so if you've got PK on the brain, you better be prepared in more ways than one.

But Princess is incredibly strong herself too.

The reason for her large fan base is simply that she's beautiful, gentle, and powerful.

She also contributes lots of other valuable information to the forums.

She was the one who discovered extra races, extra equipment, and skills like Superior Magic Assist and Secret Art of Necromancy.

Her main weapon is her rapier, and she fights like a Jedi. Your weapon will snap if you try to imitate her.

The princess's production skills are Cooking and Alchemy. She possesses Necromantic

Magic.

Her main source of power is Dark Magic, in part because of her race.

Here are the following official videos where you can currently see the princess:

TV Commercial 1: Defensive War. Official Trailer 2 - Defensive War Long Cut.

Here is her personal video page.

http://******/Anastasia

That's it for now!

>> 980 Please take over the next thread.

495. Princess Watchman

I hadn't seen Princess in so long! But! She got a makeover!

496. Princess Watchman

She sure did! Her hair's different too! It's a makeover!

497. Princess Watchman

That dress... I'm not confident in the bare shoulders, but I'm kinda into it...

498. Princess Watchman

It's for a big chest...

499. Princess Watchman

Should we pull it up for her?

500 Princess Watchman

A corset? I hear they're really painful, but maybe not in the game.

501. Princess Watchman

It's hard for true scumbags to join this conversation, you know.

502. Princess Watchman

Well, you'd never wear one in real life over a kimono or yukata...

503. Princess Watchman

What I want to know is where that rapier of hers went. It's her main weapon.

504. Princess Watchman

She's got a book on the left side now where the rapier hung. The right side has some short stick and a key?

505. Princess Watchman

The key's purpose and design really make me think it's the Silver Key, from what I've seen... It would be crazy if they just copied it perfectly,

506. Princess Watchman

Did she turn the rapier into a book?

507. Princess Watchman

I dunno. It seems weirdly late to change your main weapon. I never got the impression that the rapier slowed her down at all either.

508. Princess Watchman

But isn't the princess playing as a magic attacker?

509. Princess Watchman

Ah... But wouldn't it be a waste to get rid of the rapier's defensive functions?

510. Princess Watchman

Hmmmm... That's true. A magic attacker having such survivability has to be ideal for them...

511. Princess Watchman

I was following some PKers and ended up filming this video.

http://******/******/watch*****

512. Princess Watchman

Oooh!

513. Princess Watchman

If PKers are losing six against one, I guess we can ignore them. But more importantly, check out that sword! And her book!

514. Princess Watchman

Whooooo! She's so cool!

515. Princess Watchman

You're telling me this is how the top first-wavers fight? Then what would you call me?

516. Princess Watchman

You're just ordinary.

517. Princess Watchman

That's sad, but accurate.

518. Princess Watchman

Wow, that movement. Is that thanks to the key too?

519. Princess Watchman

I don't think so. Nobody's seen the key activate.

520. Princess Watchman

Sounds like that's Return from Space Magic. The princess wrote about it on the magic board.

521. Princess Watchman

Wow... Thanks, Princess, for always updating us.

522. Princess Watchman

Yeah, for real.

523. Princess Watchman

I assumed there must be a return spell of some sort. I guess we've found it now.

524. Princess Watchman

But I hesitate to take both Light and Dark magic...

525. Princess Watchman

Just one or the other will help you fight at nighttime.

526. Princess Watchman

And most people go with Light magic since it branches into Holy magic.

527. Princess Watchman

They also say Space Magic costs so much to cast, it makes you not even want to use it once you have it...

528. Princess Watchman

That sword... It's the stick she keeps on her belt, next to the Silver Key!

529. Princess Watchman

Her sword really is that stick, huh?

530. Princess Watchman

Ah, you're right. It reminds me of light and beam weapons from sci-fi movies and anime...

531. Princess Watchman

Agreed. If the book also has something to do with Cthulhu, there's a chance it's an artifact, just like the key.

532. Princess Watchman

So it's very possible their rarity is "Godly."

533. Princess Watchman

And it's very possible that's why the animation when you use them is so detailed.

534. Princess Watchman

I concur that the possibility is "very." I wanna know what that book's called.

535. Princess Watchman

Saaame.

536. Princess Watchman

I'm also curious about whether or not it's actually possible to block explosion spells with burst spells.

537. Princess Watchman

Oh yeah, good point. I want to know that too. The princess had a ton of HP left over.

538. Princess Watchman

What I want to know is why her stance changed.

539. Princess Watchman

There's so much information about the princess!

540. Princess Watchman

Yeah, seriously.

811. Princess Watchman

Princess posted about a new material called “magi iron” on the production board.

812. Princess Watchman

Iron ore with magical energy inside... So it's magical iron.

813. Princess Watchman

I feel like we're on the verge of getting enchanted weapons!

814. Princess Watchman

The only way to get those at the moment is Assignment Magic, right?

815. Princess Watchman

Right. With physical resistance and stuff, most people aren't too desperate.

816. Princess Watchman

True. I guess you could go to the north.

817. Princess Watchman

You can get by with blunt attacks up there.

818. Princess Watchman

But that's the area with slime and spirit body enemies who have Physical Immunity and Physical Resistance.

819. Princess Watchman

That reminds me. I haven't seen any of those yet.

820. Princess Watchman

You're not even counted as a full-fledged adventurer until you hit level 40, so maybe we'll see them later.

821. Princess Watchman

I see. So we're still weaklings within the scale of this world.

822. Princess Watchman

They're also holding off on dungeons, it seems. We've still got a lot to work on.

961. Anastasia

My weapon is an athame. The book is the Book of Eibon. The key is the Silver Key.

962. Princess Watchman

Holy...

963. Princess Watchman

I'd guessed the key... But the Book of Eibon too...?

964. Princess Watchman

Is an athame that dagger they supposedly use in magic ceremonies?

965. Princess Watchman

That's all I know about them.

966. Princess Watchman

You can use the athame as a catalyst and a light sword?!

967. Anastasia

The Silver Key can only be used in safe areas and functions just like statues. It also gives modifiers to Space Magic spells.

The Book of Eibon boosts all spells... No, actually, I think it's all stats. It acts as a magical catalyst.

968. Princess Watchman

I see. So you can teleport to other towns with the key if you're in a safe zone. Then if you're in the hunting grounds, you use Return.

969. Princess Watchman

The athame works for Magic Catalyst? Or is it Dagger?

970. Anastasia

It falls under Rapier and Magic Catalyst for me. It takes on an element to function as a sword, and the blade changes color depending on that element. I'm using the Space element in that video.

I can't reveal too much, but those are the basics for now.

971. Princess Watchman

Thank you, Princess!

972. Princess Watchman

Shank you.

973. Princess Watchman

As always, that was fast.

974. Anastasia

Ah, but now that I've evolved, Light magic isn't a weakness for me either. It does 1× damage now.

975. Princess Watchman

For real?

976. Princess Watchman

But you did so much damage. That seems low.

977. Princess Watchman

Maybe her magic defense stat is high.

978. Princess Watchman

That's probably true too, but there must be some significance to those burst spells.

979. Princess Watchman

Does it negate the other spells?

980. Anastasia

I asked the prime minister of the Evernight Castle (a castle in the Nether), and he told me that using the opposite element matters. Of course, the spell needs to be powerful before anything else.

I knew they were coming after me, so I centered burst spells around myself.

981. Princess Watchman

Opposites matter? I guess it makes sense that, if the spell isn't powerful at all, it won't be able to negate opposing spells.

982. Princess Watchman

So you can either guard against them or try to offset them with spells of your own...?

983. Anastasia

Oh, do I have to start the next thread? A thread about myself? That doesn't really feel right, so can the next poster do it instead?

984. Princess Watchman

Lmao.

985. Princess Watchman

>>984 Ah, go start it then.

986. Princess Watchman

Oh... BRB.

987. Princess Watchman

Change the rapier part of the OP to athame.

988. Princess Watchman

Sir, yes, sir.

989. Anastasia

The name of my race is Aversa Princess.

990. Princess Watchman

Got it.

CHAPTER 3

FRIDAY—AFTERNOON

ALL RIGHT, time to head to the Evernight Castle next door.

“Prime Minister,” I greet him.

“What can I help you with?”

“Do you know any ways to protect against Bind spells?”

“Oh, you actually know about those?”

“You sound as disrespectful as always.”

“Ha ha ha! First, you need to raise your magical resistance, or in other words, your Spirit. Victory goes to whoever makes the first move. That’s the second tip. Third, learn about magical energy repulsion. Finally, you can sense a burst being activated with Magia Trace.”

“One of those things doesn’t sound like the other, but I’ll ignore it for now.”

“You can also take out your target before they activate a Bind. That way, it’ll never be activated in the first place.”

Raising my Spirit means that I’ll have a greater magical resistance to Bind spells. If I’m caught in it, I can let my magical energy flow and resist the Bind.

Of course, if I just kill the spellcaster first, they won’t be able to cast it at all.

Alternatively, I can sense the spell with my vision and avoid it.

“There are other varieties of Binds out there too. If you don’t find out about those, I don’t know how you’ll prevent against them,” the prime minister told me.

There was the solo Bind, the installation Bind, and AoE Bind. Naturally, with each

variety came a different method of response.

WAND: STATIC BIND

An installation-type bind. Anyone who enters the radius will be instantly restrained.

LONG STAFF: QUICK BIND

The speed of restraint is fast, but the bind itself isn't very strong.

BOOK: COUNTER BIND

This spell has a short range but binds the target quickly and firmly.

CRYSTAL: AREA BIND

Binds multiple targets within its parameters. It's not very quick but is average in terms of binding strength.

SHADOW MAGIC: SHADOW BIND

A spell that extends shadows, turning them into restraints.

TREE MAGIC: FRONS BIND

A spell that extends vines to restrain a target.

SPACE MAGIC: RESTRAINT FORCE FIELD

Creates a force field that traps targets inside.

YIN YANG: FIVE ELEMENTS SEAL

Place talismans in five places to create a force field that traps targets inside.

SECRET ART OF NECROMANCY: YEARNING MASSES

Servants swarm and grab hold of a target.

As far as I know, the Space Magic and Secret Art of Necromancy binds haven't yet been discovered, and Yin Yang sounds completely new to me too. I'll ask him about that one later... There sure are more Bind attacks than I thought.

"There are four categories of Bind spells: rings, loops, chains, and force fields," states the prime minister.

Quick Bind falls under the ring category. Rings form around the wrists and ankles to hold someone still.

Area Bind is a hoop. The arms, stomach, thighs, and ankles are bound.

Shadow Bind and Frons Bind are chain types. Shadows and vines extend from the ground or walls to wrap around a target.

Static Bind is a combination of hoop and chain types. If you enter its perimeter, you get restrained with a hoop, then chains emerge and hook you down to the ground or a magic circle.

Counter Bind has a short range but uses a ring to stop a target who's attacked you

before attaching chains to them.

"I doubt you'll be able to evade Binds, madam, so simply let Quick Bind and Area Bind hit you once cast. As for Static Bind, you can simply avoid entering the area of effect. Counter Bind is for fighting enemies at close range."

Shadow Bind and Frons Bind function like ropes that extend from the point of activation to wrap around the target, pulling them closer. The binds themselves are strong but slow to activate. That's why you can flee if you deflect the vines or shadows stretching out toward you. But they're persistent, so trying to dodge them isn't recommended. You can also set up the activation point to your desire, allowing you to take on fast-moving enemies. This means that Magical Break and Magic Parry are perfect countermeasures. In my case, I'd be using Mirror Stance. Running just means enemies will chase me but give up when I reflect their attacks.

Static Bind and Counter Bind have somewhat unique activation requirements. On the other hand, they're highly effective. Therefore, I need to be careful of these two. The former will be something to watch out for with Magia Trace. The latter will require use of a close-range attack.

Restraint Force Field and Five Elements Seal are slightly unique binds, since they function more as locked spaces. They'll also repel my attacks. To fight against these spells, I have to either leave the area of effect before it's activated or physically destroy the force field. If I'm imprisoned alone inside a small force field, it'd be easiest to simply destroy it with Dark Burst. But there almost certainly aren't any players who currently use those moves.

"The best defense is to raise your Spirit. It'll be impossible to put yourself in a better position than that. Try hitting me with a Bind," the prime minister urges.

As soon as I cast Shadow Bind on him, strings of shadows inch forward to tangle around him, only for them to dissolve when they get close to his body.

Indeed, that seems like it must grant some peace of mind, but I can't imagine such a phenomenon in a fight between players.

"Well, in your case, madam..."

As he speaks, the prime minister casts a Bind at me.

His Quick Bind forms rings around my wrists and ankles. I'm now frozen where I stand. How amusing.

But the Book of Eibon automatically floats up and begins to circle around me, causing the Bind countdown to drop rapidly.

"So it really does resist binding spells," he comments.

"Automatic resistance against a hostile spell..." I muse out loud. "This must be because of Antispell."

"Most likely. Usually, you would resist the Bind by pouring magical energy into the points of contact."

I use Magia Control to focus, and the countdown gets even faster. Cracks form in the restraints before they finally shatter to pieces, freeing me. This makes me feel like the Book of Eibon might be enough, so long as the Bind spells come from players.

"Can you tell me about Yearning Masses?" I ask the prime minister.

"That's a particularly unique kind of Bind. Your servants will swarm the target and physically restrain them."

"What's the cost if the target breaks through the servants?"

"There isn't one. You only have the fixed cost that comes with activation. The effects increase with the amount the servants cost."

It sounds like as long as you can afford it, you can increase the number of physical servants doing the swarming. Also, if that cost doesn't decrease, then the servants can sacrifice themselves to maintain the Bind. I see. Loyal servants, as always. They have more guts than most.

"That about does it for Binds," the prime minister concludes.

"Thank you for teaching me. By the way, what is Yin and Yang?"

"Goodness. You don't know about that?"

"You don't need to say it like that."

"It's a unique sort of magic that uses talismans. The weakness of the system is that it can't function without those talisman catalysts. But it's similar to sorcery, meaning you consume less MP."

"Interesting... But what's the difference between sorcery and spells?"

"The main difference comes down to whether you're using mana or using only the magical energy you have on hand."

He explains that sorcery is something practiced by very few. They use it by harnessing the natural magical energy—also known as “mana”—in their surroundings, or rather, that which is abundant in this entire world. Sorcery is an absolute power mainly used by ghosts, dragons, and the outer ones.

The version of mana that anyone can use is just “magic,” which makes use of your own magical energy reserves. It could also be called an attempt by other creatures to imitate those with overwhelming powers. Perhaps it was done out of fear...

Though the phenomena are different in scale, they can generally accomplish the same things.

Instead of a person simply using their magical energy on hand, they use magical energy in the environment to induce changes. I suppose I can understand why the latter’s effects would be on a larger scale.

There are many fictional works out there that define the relationship between magic and sorcery differently. Now that I think of it, the Japanese translations of the Cthulhu Mythos, which is linked to the outer ones, used words like “sorcery” instead of “magic.” I feel like they just wanted to reference those stories, but I suppose it’s not a problem. In this game, it only indicates whether or not you use mana.

"You'll have to raise your Spirit if you want to use it," says the prime minister.

"So it's not something innate after all? What about you, Prime Minister?"

"I can use it, all right. Not that I run into situations where it *can* be used. I get by just fine with my regular magic. I don't see myself using sorcery unless I want to slay a dragon or destroy a town."

So ghosts, dragons, and the outer ones possess congenital sorcery abilities, but if you

raise your Spirit, anyone can acquire it? "That seems dangerous," I conclude.

"You can think of the Dragon Breath that greater dragons use as sorcery. Compared to them, lesser dragons' breath is nothing but a light gust. Ha ha ha ha!"

"Greater dragons" must refer to ones like the Éclair Tempesta Dragon that ambushed us during the camping event.

"I've also been wanting to learn more about dragons. I read the books written by humans, but I felt like they didn't quite get it right."

"I see... Why not take a look in the library? You'll also find recipes for talismans there," replies the prime minister.

"Do talismans fall under Alchemy?"

"They certainly do."

I check my housing menu for the location of the library. It looks like it's on one side of the first floor. I think I'll search for books on dragons and new recipes.

Was there anything else I wanted to know about? Ah, that's right... "Prime Minister, the outer ones referred to me as someone who will meet her fate someday. Do undead die too?"

"Of course we do. We're just unaging, not undying. Or rather, it'd be more accurate to say that we disappear, not die. I don't know of any other unaging *and* undying beings aside from the outer ones. In a way, I suppose that applies to outsiders like you too, madam."

I see. From a human's perspective, unaging is close enough to immortality that it amounts to the same thing. But the outer ones neither age nor die, so they see us undead as having fixed life spans. It feels a little like they're looking down on us.

Undead must also be called "undead" in part due to our appearance. We really are like a bunch of people who died but are continuing to walk around.

When the undead "disappear," they immediately reincarnate. It sounds like there's also the method of praying for "the end" to a statue of Stellura.

The outer ones merely “leave” this plane and are forced back to the Medium. Then they return after a rest, so they’re back to hunting you down if you end up in their sights. Their assassination skills are amplified after being forced to tactlessly “leave,” so I imagine everyone else just wants them to hurry up and die already.

“All right, then. I’m going to ask Lana about Bind prevention measures next,” I tell him.

“Don’t do that. It’ll be a waste of time. All she’ll tell you is to cut the enemy down before they can activate it.”

I blink at him.

“She’s strong enough to be able to do such a thing,” he continues.

“Then I’ll head to the library instead.”

“That sounds like a better idea.”

I head straight for the library instead of going to see Lana.

The castle library is a single room. I manage to find books containing Alchemy recipes and information on dragons. Then, my eyes land upon a book about Stellura. I pick it up and head to a chair.

I start by reading through the recipe book, confirming through the game log that I’ve received the recipes. Then I move on to the book about dragons.

To start, the dragons’ hierarchy of strength is as follows: lesser dragon < a large gap < dragon (also referred to as elemental dragons, and strength depends on element compatibility) < ancient dragon < mythical dragon.

Starting as dragon hatchlings, the babies evolve to suit their environment, which affects both their appearance and elemental attributes.

Mythical dragons and ancient dragons also begin as hatchlings but don’t have the same appearance as elemental dragons. They are said to be closer to ghosts and could probably be referred to as spectral dragon hatchlings.

Dragon Magic can be used above ground, sometimes causing people to mistake lesser dragons for dragons. But they are only considered to be the same race when they are hatchlings.

The difference between dragons and ancient dragons is somewhat like the distinction between humans and elves, but from the perspective of these powerful wyrms, lesser dragons are like lizards in comparison. Dragons and ancient dragons may even consume lesser dragons if they're hungry and one happens to be nearby.

As an aside, mythical dragons and ancient dragons are masters of sorcery, while adult elemental dragons only use it for breath attacks. Lesser dragons use Dragon Magic with less frequency. This is believed to be due to their inability to utilize mana, meaning the consumption required is nearly impossible for them.

To digress, so-called "dragon's blood" is heavily valued because dragons, as the strongest of all living creatures, possess unthinkable amounts of magical energy. One can also harvest a large amount of blood from them due to their large bodies. To summarize the issue, dragon's blood is only special in that it caters to the desire for blood rich in magical energy.

All materials containing this energy are highly valuable, not just dragon's blood.

So blood doesn't have anything to do with it at all. Hatchlings evolve into dragons, and lesser dragons are essentially dragon impostors. They just evolved to look that way, right?

Honestly, in a world where evolutions exist, there are probably creatures who undergo such dramatic visual changes that it's hard to tell what they are. Maybe some have no identifiable origin at all.

Next up is the book on Stellura.

The goddess Stellura is known as the eldest daughter of the four pillars.

Born from the threshold between light and darkness, the two elements fall under her control.

She is the pillar who presides over life and death—the fated spans of time in this world that cannot be resisted.

But Stellura is also a compassionate goddess who shelters the monsters that have lost their place of belonging.

She is personified amongst humanity as the beautiful and serene woman with ashen hair and iridescent eyes when she appears to deliver divine messages.

Her true form is a dimensional rift, a mass of iridescent spheres endlessly changing form and shape, a cycle of union and separation. Appearances are trivial matters to the gods, but the same cannot be said for humans. That is why she transformed into a being that resembled a human.

The gods observe our souls and despise those who speak in empty words—especially Stellura, who rules over contracts and judgment. This makes her followers even more loyal. What Stellura desires isn't blind faith but loyalty—both to herself and others.

The gods possess many faces. Haventhys is well known as the goddess of love, and yet disasters manifest at times in nature. He bestows both blessings and destruction.

Stellura, of course, is no different. She grants her divine prophecies to humanity and is famous for her revelations of coming plagues and disasters. However, she's also feared. Her powers make her the most severe and merciless of all the gods. Stellura rules the afterlife as part of her jurisdiction over reincarnation. A human's opinion on life or death is a trivial matter to the one in charge of their soul. Though it is not visible to humans, the soul is all that remains after death. This is difficult to accept for living beings who instinctively fear the end.

When Stellura does not rebuke someone, it is by no means proof that she is showing mercy. Everyone will atone for their actions in the end. This is a fact that must not be forgotten.

She wants loyalty, not blind faith? I don't really understand religious faith, so I suppose this is helpful to me. I feel like Japanese religious beliefs are rather unique.

I'm sure they want us to think about our own actions properly instead of blindly devoting ourselves to the gods. Looking at it differently, Stellura's followers sound

very strong-willed, although I probably should have noticed that already. The same goes for the outer ones, of course, but people like the prime minister and Lana are very individualistic as well.

The last part seems like a warning. This sort of thing is common as well. Japan may have eight million gods, but this is a world with only a few. Each pillar holds multiple powers, bringing forth inconsistencies, a loss in unity of actions, and behavior that almost feels like a glitch. Life and death are opposites, as are light and darkness. You can't lose one without also losing the other. The book seems to be reminding me to keep these things in mind when I decide what I'm going to do.

Hmm... Thinking of it that way, perhaps gods like Stella and Cthulhu actually have it easy. It's Haventhys who seems to have the most difficult job to me. Two of the pillars seem to have very defined areas, but it's hard to reach a conclusion on Haventhys, it seems. One way or another, I think I see the course of things now.

Learning about the gods makes me think of how common stories of corrupt clergy are in other works of fiction. Such themes result in big clashes in those stories, but there's little chance of that in this world, isn't there? The gods send assassins called the outer ones, so once those clergy are killed, they'll probably be sent to the Abyss where they can see Hell with their own two eyes.

All right, that's enough reading for now. I think I'll try crafting talismans now that I have the recipes. It will take some time to craft magical energy paper on my own, but Ms. Meghan probably sells it, so I can buy some and test it myself.

I teleport to Starting Town and enter Ms. Meghan's shop.

"You have magical energy paper, right, Master?"

"I certainly do."

"There's something I'd like to use it for"

I buy one sheet of magical energy paper and use my Magic Refining Circle that I got at level 30 of Alchemy. The art is usually utilized by drawing an Alchemy circle with magical energy, but for talismans, you're supposed to engrave the formation of the five elements in a star.

[TOOL] FIVE ELEMENTS TALISMAN

Rarity: RA Quality: C

A single-use talisman that absorbs mana to stimulate magical energy and unleash a certain effect.

Required for use of Yin and Yang.

By fulfilling special requirements, you have unlocked Yin.

By fulfilling special requirements, you have unlocked Yang.

“Oh ho, a five-element talisman? Haven’t seen anyone crafting those in years,” Ms. Meghan remarks.

“Do people not use them?” I respond.

“Some do, but they’re not particularly popular. I only make them for shipping items myself.”

“Are they not very effective?”

“It’s not that. The problem lies with money and usability. Their effects last a long time, but they’re consumables, you know. Some of the top adventurers and clergy use them.”

“I see. How much is one of these talismans?”

“At C-quality, one is 300 gold. Engraving the formation takes a high level of skill. But more than anything, a lot of labor.”

I can produce eight talismans with one sheet of magical energy paper. Since the paper costs 400 gold, that’s a profit of 2,000.

But there's something more important than that. Obtaining a talisman seems to unlock two new skills. I think I ought to make a few more and sell them on consignment.

I'll restrict sales to one talisman per account, since they're used to unlock skills. If that's all they can do, players can trade them around for unlocking. People who actually want to level the skills will have to search for more talismans, now that they know what the item is.

It looks like Yang is a skill for buffs and Yin is for debuffs. The arts that come with level 1 are a strength increase and decrease, which I already have Enchant for. But these new arts probably last longer. However, I won't actually know how strong the buff is without testing it out.

For now, I'll start producing talismans to sell.

After chatting with my teacher while I craft talismans, I remember a certain question from earlier, so I decide to ask her about it.

"By the way, Master. I'm thinking of improving my Alchemy circle."

"Huh? What did you just say?"

Master looks really shocked. From that reaction, I can pretty much tell what the people above ground think about this sort of thing.

"I probably shouldn't use it above ground, should I?"

"No, using it isn't the issue... Is it even possible?"

"The prime minister told me that it should be possible. I just don't know how its effects will change, since I haven't tried it for myself yet."

"Prime minister?"

"The prime minister of the Evernight Castle."

"Ah, right, in the Nether... You can bring up the circle if you have a sample of a

completed one."

"The problem is the limitation on quality. What should I do about that?"

"Can't you go through a new Alchemy circle instead of using cores?"

"Ah, that makes sense. I'm going to keep working on it, so I'll bring it to you when I'm finished."

"Take your time. I'll be waiting."

It looks like I've only made 800 talismans. I see how these would be annoying if you don't have very many of them. But for now, this is good enough.

I leave Ms. Meghan's shop and head to Mr. Ertz's shop next.

"Welcome!" the clerk greets me.

This is a smithy, so the shelves are filled with metal weapons and armor.

Mr. Ertz spent money on a production environment instead, so this place is rather simple. After all, you can just take items from the in-game menu without needing to physically pick them up. The shop interior itself is mostly for display.

I see several other players here too, but I ignore them for now and head straight for the shop clerk.

"I'd like to sell these," I tell him.

"Three kinds of ores, I see. Thank you for your business."

I give the list to the clerk and have him purchase my chrome, vanadium, and molybdenum. I'll keep the halchium for now.

The profit of 22,000 gold isn't much to speak of, but at least it's enough to cover my pickaxe expenses. My magi iron and almandine magi iron will probably net me a lot of gold, but I want to hold on to them for now.

I haven't released any information about the almandine magi iron yet, so I'm not sure how many people even know it exists.

I buy four more steel pickaxes to replenish the broken ones, then head to the trade union.

I put my talismans up for sale on consignment as planned, then recover the profits I made from the magic clay.

Looking at consignment sales really makes me realize how few Alchemy users there are. I suppose that's to be expected, considering it's a skill that despite making you a jack of all trades, you'll still be master of none.

Alchemy requires a bit more materials compared to other skills, and you can't even get expansion cores without finding a teacher, so the quality of your products will never go above C. Some crafted items only seem to exist through Alchemy, but it also takes some obsession to get to things like magic clay and talismans.

That isn't so bad, seeing as how you can earn money from those sorts of items, but I can't say I've overlooked the flaws in the system.

I probably don't need to mention the talismans on the BBS. I already left a comment in the item description, and I'm sure the buyers will post about them on the general discussion and magic boards anyway. I feel like the talismans will sell out quickly due to how few there are.

I deposit the 22,000 gold I earned from the ores to the union.

Now I think it's time to return to mining in the north.

As I exit the union, a shadow passes across the sun. I look up and spot some sort of large creature slowly descending.

It has the head of a hawk and four legs. This must be the mythical griffin.

It lands in the town square surprisingly quietly for an animal of its large size. The players all break out into murmurs, but the residents are just as surprised. I'm pretty sure there hasn't been any information about griffins posted to the forums yet, so most

players are probably seeing one for the first time.

I see that a woman has dismounted from the griffin... Is it just me, or is the beast staring right at me? I move a little and watch its eyes follow me, so it's definitely not my imagination. The griffin disappears once it's recalled by the woman. That makes her a summoner.

Her marker is green, the color of residents, but she's not from around here. Maybe she's been away on some sort of business and just returned now that it's complete. Could this be the start of a new scenario? I'm not sure what it means yet, but I'm certainly a bit curious.

The woman walks off on her way, so I think I'll teleport north now and do my mining.

I'll spend my day holed up in the caves.

OFFICIAL BBS 3

[The key to conquering] Comprehensive Thread 85 [Lies with residents]

1. Passing Conqueror

This thread is a comprehensive thread regarding conquering new areas.

Put down any information you can.

Past threads: http://*****

>> 980 Continue this discussion in the next thread.

328. Passing Conqueror

Affinity stats mean everything...

329. Passing Conqueror

I heard residents ignore you if your affinity drops way down.

330. Passing Conqueror

How is your affinity dropping that much without committing a crime?

331. Passing Conqueror

This.

332. Passing Conqueror

Also, kids are the most strict when it comes to affinity.

333. Passing Conqueror

Children are honest creatures.

334. Passing Conqueror

It's crazy how they'll just refuse to get within a certain distance of you.

335. Passing Conqueror

On the other hand, they start coming right up to you if they like you.

336. Passing Conqueror

You can actually train them to take food from you...

337. Passing Conqueror

Delicious food beats everything else.

338. Passing Conqueror

I was eating not too long ago and noticed a kid watching me. So I gave him some food, and he said it tasted like it was from "the lady in the dress." It actually *was* food made by Princess. How'd the kid know that?

339. Passing Conqueror

Lmao. Kid's got a crazy good palate.

340. Passing Conqueror

They can tell by the taste...?

341. Passing Conqueror

Maybe the kid has some greater story relating to that, and he just came up to you by coincidence...

342. Passing Conqueror

By the way, did you guys see Princess's consignment goods? There was some insane

stuff in there again.

343. Passing Conqueror

Huh? What's there?

344. Passing Conqueror

I'm running to the nearest union.

345. Passing Conqueror

She's not selling very many.

346. Passing Conqueror

Oh, is this it? Some of this magic clay is really expensive too...

347. Passing Conqueror

The princess uses Alchemy, right? She's soared right past C-quality items. It must be because of her teacher.

348. Passing Conqueror

Woo-hoo! I bought a talisman.

349. Passing Conqueror

Are you gonna curse someone?

350. Passing Conqueror

Don't do this! You want to hurt me, don't you?! It's just like in a dirty manga!

351. Passing Conqueror

You people have overactive imaginations.

352. Passing Conqueror

It's because we live in a dreamland.

353. Passing Conqueror

Depends which dreamlands you're talking about...

354. Passing Conqueror

Iä! Iä!

355. Passing Conqueror

Not that one!

356. Passing Conqueror

Oh ho? I take it you're not a person, are you?

357. Passing Conqueror

An emissary from hell! Sp*der-Man!

358. Passing Conqueror

An emissary from hell... So the princess's servant?

359. Passing Conqueror

Ah, you're right. He would be.

360. Passing Conqueror

Princess, you better choose your emissaries carefully.

361. Passing Conqueror

Wait.

362. Passing Conqueror

Anyway, what's a talisman...?

363. Passing Conqueror

Yeah. Can anyone explain?

364. Passing Conqueror

You put them in your home to bring good luck.

365. Passing Conqueror

I'm not asking about real life, obviously!

366. Passing Conqueror

Sounds like they're a consumable item you use with Yin and Yang to activate spells.

367. Passing Conqueror

And what's Yin and Yang?

368. Passing Conqueror

I bought a talisman and unlocked both Yin and Yang. Looks like they're forms of magic specializing in buffs and debuffs.

369. Passing Conqueror

It must be limited to one per person, because the skills unlock with a single talisman purchase. If you give it to someone else, they'll probably unlock the skills too.

370. Passing Conqueror

They also say "Now that you know about the item, if you want to level up the skills more, do your best to search for more talismans."

371. Passing Conqueror

Hmm... So they're like support items. I wonder if it's really worth using them,

considering they're consumables.

372. Passing Conqueror

The effects last a long time, but using the talisman is a little tricky before you get used to it.

373. Passing Conqueror

I'm really curious about talismans, but I've never seen them in stores before.

374. Passing Conqueror

Me neither.

375. Passing Conqueror

But she said to search... That makes it sound like they're not impossible to get.

376. Passing Conqueror

If they do exist, I'll bet they're in Alchemy-related shops. But where would those be...?

377. Passing Conqueror

Maybe pharmacies?

378. Passing Conqueror

Pharmacies usually have Compounding materials. Maybe that means general stores are for Alchemy.

379. Passing Conqueror

I feel like I haven't seen Alchemy items in general stores either, but I guess you should just ask the shopkeeper.

380. Passing Conqueror

Well, the people who wanna level their skills will just have to search for them.

CHAPTER 4

THE SORCIERE GIRL

AFTER I WAKE UP in the morning, it's a hard day of mining ores ahead.

My Mining skill has evolved into Miner at its second tier, meaning I can now mine two ores at once. I'm also seeing a higher rate of magi iron, perhaps because I increased my skill level. What a wonderful reward. I feel so satisfied.

I also leveled up my combat skills when I mined yesterday afternoon. For second-tier skills, you usually learn a new art or spell at level 30, and then at level 35 and up, you get improvements to the skills you had before.

Superior Magic Assist is at level 35 now, and the magic I use in my daily life has become more efficient. That means there aren't many benefits to the effects themselves. However, raising your skill level brings an increase to all modifiers, which is good enough for me.

Getting Magic Catalyst to level 20 unlocks Magic Stance. This raises the magic attack stat while lowering magic defense. It might be a good idea to use Magic Stance as a regular part of my routine.

As for Radiant Magic, I learned Lumen Ray, which allows me to fire a penetrating laser beam.

All right. I'm done mining, so it's time for breakfast.

I finish up my morning routine and log right back in again. But what should I do today?

Hmm... For now, I think I'll make a bit of magic clay. I leave my villa to gather soil and water.

Once I'm finished, I return to the villa and enchant the items in my Alchemy room, which grants me buffs while I work. I use pure dirt, water of reminiscence, and orbs instead of magic stones.

Now I unleash my magical energy!

...Well, that's a cool way of putting it, but all I'm really doing is blowing myself up. I simply don't have enough control over it, as embarrassing as it is to admit. My HP plummets downward.

I think I'll use the magic clay I already made to create a water jug.

Alchemist has reached level 25.

You have acquired the art Element Combination through Alchemist.

[TOOL] PURE JUG OF REMINISCENCE

Rarity: EP Quality: B

A water jug made from magic clay that's full of magical energy.

This jug is perfect for storing water full of magical energy too.

Sure. That seems good.

ELEMENT COMBINATION

Combines two elements to strengthen them.

Hmm... So it seems that it's possible to combine elements.

I haven't done much research into that yet, and since I would have to start by gathering materials to investigate, I don't think it's something I can do at the moment. I haven't

even found many elemental materials in the first place. I could test it out with a few of the elemental metals I have, but the cost is a bit too high for me.

I have 32 orbs remaining after making 25 lumps of magic clay. It looks like I have 20 clear orbs. Production really uses up a lot of my orbs... Then again, magic stones are rare drops, so it's an excellent rate for items that can be obtained for free.

I decide to take eight pieces of magi iron ore and turn them into two ingots. Then I turn them into almandine magi iron. Now I have three pieces that I can probably have Mr. Ertz turn into a one-handed weapon.

All right. I'll ask Lana to work with me until lunchtime.

By fulfilling special requirements, an extra art has been added to Unparalleled Style.

I eat the somen we had at home for lunch, then I log back in.

I acquired Protective Style during my morning training, even though it didn't seem like something I'd use very often.

I fill up my water jug with water of reminiscence and head to Mr. Ertz's shop.

"Welcome!" the shop clerk greets me.

"I'm here to see the shopkeeper. My name is Anastasia."

"Please wait here for a moment."

The clerk brings Mr. Ertz out to see me.

Once he appears, I hand him the slightly reddened iron ingots and ask if he can process them.

"Whoa! That new environment's already paying off, huh? You've got three of them? What do you want me to make?" Mr. Ertz asks me.

"I'd like a one-handed hammer. I think a mace would be best."

"A mace, you say? I'll get right on it."

Weapons classed as one-handed hammers come in multiple types. For instance, along with what you'd typically envision as being a hammer, there are also morning stars and maces.

They say that the simpler the shape of the weapon, the higher its durability. To put it more specifically, even if the durability stat of two weapons is an even 100, that number may represent different things. All durabilities in this game represent percentages, and the way you use your weapon decides how easily it breaks. It might be accurate to say that the simpler weapons are harder to destroy.

Weapons are for attack, and armor is for defending. Both categories have an optimal way of using them that reduces overall damage taken to the item. It's why attempting to block a blow with a weapon and failing puts that item at a much higher risk of breaking. You can't just rely on arts for everything—you need to master the use of your weapons.

Mr. Ertz probably needs some more time to finish my mace, so I sell my vanadium and molybdenum to the shop clerk and restock my supply of pickaxes.

"Is that you, Ko—I mean, Akirina's big sister?"

"Um, what...? Ah! You're Ichi—I mean...the class president, right?"

One of the players in the shop is actually a classmate of mine.

"I'm Lapis. You must be the princess I've heard about. Anastasia? But does that mean your sister is indeed...?"

"Yes, she's my little sister. I'm Tasha or Stasia. I don't mind if you call me Anastasia either."

"Hmm... Then can I go with Tasha?"

"That's fine."

This girl, Ichinomiya Ruri, is the president of my class. The name "Ruri" means the

color of lapis lazuli, which is probably what inspired her character name.

Unlike how she is in real life, her character doesn't have her hair in braids. I didn't even recognize her for a moment. She's a pretty small person, just a bit taller than Abby, and yet she has a two-handed hammer on her back. Her curly hair, the color of milk tea, is about shoulder length, and her eyes are a deep lapis blue. She's way different from how she looks in real life. I almost feel like I should get a medal for recognizing her in the first place.

It looks like she's wearing light armor. It is a dress with a miniskirt and a leather plate of some kind in the front. The rest of the dress is made of cloth, with fluffy fur around her neck and shoulders. She also has long sleeves, gloves, and boots that don't go up to her shins. I suppose they could be called engineer boots. The outfit doesn't reveal much of her figure at all. At most, her legs are exposed, but that's all.



“So you play video games too, Tasha?”

“Of course I do. My sister loves games, after all. You didn’t seem like the gamer type to me either, President.”

“I just happened to buy this one, and it was expensive enough that it would be a waste not to play... It’s actually pretty fun.”

So she got hooked when she finally gave it a try? *Welcome to your new addiction. Enjoy your stay.*

“Hey, sorry for the wait. I’ve got the weapon you ordered,” says Mr. Ertz.

“A fire mace? How much for it?” I ask.

“Instead of money, I’d prefer information. I should really be the one paying *you*, to be frank.”

“Hmm... Very well. I’ll see you some other time, Ms. Lapis.”

“See ya!” she calls out.

I add her as a friend, then follow Mr. Ertz to his workshop. Naturally, it has a much different vibe compared to my Alchemy room. His workshop includes things like a furnace and anvil.

“All right... I made those elemental metals with Alchemy. I’m not sure how else they can be made,” I explain.

“Alchemy, huh...?”

“So far I’ve also made magi iron ingots, magic stones bigger than medium size, and gems bigger than medium size.”

“That’s how you got your almandine magi iron? I don’t even have any magi iron...”

“You haven’t found any yet?”

“No one’s brought it in, at least.”

"This is just a theory since I was able to mine it at my home, but I believe that magi iron doesn't show up unless you mine from a vein in an area rich in mana. I think the best thing to do is set up a force field and vein at your home. The Nether has a rich concentration of mana."

"I see. That force field's expensive, but I guess I've gotta give it a try. How much can you mine?"

"I've acquired Miner now, so out of twenty tries, about half of them yielded magi iron. It's a pretty good drop rate, which might be in part because of the mana density at my house, but I have nothing else to compare it to."

"Hmm... Guess I'll have to take the hit for the other first-wavers..."

First-wavers have to go through lots of trial and error to learn things. Most new information is released by the self-sacrificing top players. Only the management knows how things really work. A player has to do their own tests and post about the results. This is the first-wavers' gamble—will their experiments prove rewarding, or will they be a letdown? Each person who doesn't release their results means someone else has to do all that trial-and-error work all over again...

Leaving the elemental metals aside, I need to negotiate with Mr. Ertz. I ask him to process my magi iron ingots and create some halchium equipment.

"I'm sure I'll get a lot of good information by processing your magi iron, so I don't mind. Since you told me about halchium too, I'll give you a discount. Most people bring me ingots to work with, but the story's different when it comes to the highest-quality materials. I'll get EXP by working with halchium, so I'm glad to help."

"I've talked to Mr. Dentelle about mana concentration in regards to magic silkworms, although I don't think he's done any tests himself yet," I say.

"I'll have to ask him about it later... Anyway, you want a one-handed sword, one-handed hammer, two-handed sword, two-handed hammer, small shield, and large shield, right?"

"Correct."

"It's gotta be rough having servants that use equipment. It should be about 670,000 gold with the discount."

"Oh, that's quite a reduction. Although, I don't exactly have a lot of money right now."

"Did you spend it on your house?"

"Yes. I really went crazy on my Alchemy environment..."

"Well, I haven't made your order yet, so it's not like you have to pay right this second."

I should probably earn some money by cooking, or I could buy magic stones on consignment, turn them to magic clay, and sell them... There's also demand for talismans now, so there are lots of money-making options to choose from.

I asked Mr. Dentelle to make me a saddle before I went to bed yesterday. That will cost me 200,000 gold, so I'm really running low. For now, I think I'll drop off my ores and work outside of home today—or rather, I'll work my "side job." That's probably more accurate.

I leave Mr. Ertz's shop, head to the union, and claim my earnings from all the sales I'd made. The talismans and magic clay added up to 500,000 gold. Combined with my savings, that's 1.1 million. I'll have enough to cover my purchases without selling anything else, but since I'll be left penniless, there's really no choice but to earn more money.

The amount of magic clay I've sold tells me there must be quite a few people using it. It must be because of Doll Magic.

A medium-sized stone costs about 800 gold. Should I be using these instead of orbs? There's very little demand for magic stones at the moment. I should secure some before a use for them is found and the price surges.

I buy 100 stones for 80,000 gold.

As for jerky, that's a super popular item amongst players right now, so there's a lot being sold on the market. Most jerky is being sold for a bit less than I used to sell for, but it's not as big a reduction as I expected. That means I can still profit.

Let's see... The recipe for magical energy paper consists of vegetable fibers and magical viscous gel. The viscous gel is made from slime gel, water, and magic stones.

The size of the stone doesn't matter, so I can use an extra-small one that costs 200 gold. The fibers require paper seeds or wood waste.

One sheet of magical energy paper costs 400 gold to buy, but I can make it on my own and receive five sheets at a time. The material fees for magic stones and slime gel came out to 60 gold per sheet. It would probably be better to buy the materials on consignment instead of purchasing the paper from my master.

Using Reproduce will probably save me time and labor. I purchase 100 magic stones and 100 gels.

I already have plenty of cooking materials, so I can go without buying anything else.

I return home and get to work on mass-producing jerky, talismans, and magic clay.

I have lots of rump steaks and banty meat, so I'll turn the rump steaks to jerky and the banty meat to karaage in sort of a tatsuta-age style. I have plenty of seasonings after trading my sets during the camping event.

Chef has reached level 25.

You have acquired the art Reduction through Chef.

REDUCTION

This passive art reduces cooking prep time.

It's not particularly exciting, but at least it's convenient.

I focus on crafting lots of magical viscous gel with water of reminiscence. I'll only be able to save up money if I have lots to sell.

I end up with 900 pieces of jerky and 190 servings of karaage. I also have 1,200 talismans and 15 units of magic clay.

Each unit of magic clay is expensive, but the crafting ratio itself isn't very impressive. I can craft multiple units of everything else and only one of magic clay at a time. Honestly, the jerky crafting ratio is out of this world. One piece of meat makes forty pieces of jerky. The process is a bit of a chore, but at least it's worth making.

Space Magic has reached level 30. You have gained 2 skill points.

You have acquired Inventory Control and Space Reinforcement through Space Magic.

Oh, Space Magic? It's so convenient how this skill is always leveling up on its own. Its biggest problem is that its ease of use and purposes leave something to be desired. That's what really stops it from being an incredible skill.

INVENTORY CONTROL

Allows you to control expansion of your inventory. You may now choose time stoppage on an individual basis.

SPACE REINFORCEMENT

A passive art that strengthens defensive spells and Bind attacks.

I see. Not too interesting either... I'm sure they'll be handy to have, but controlling the time within my inventory? Oh, that reminds me. I should set up my wine barrels in my room. Now that I have my house... Actually, it's not so helpful after all.

Return is probably the art I'm the happiest about. I wonder if I'll ever learn any short-distance teleportation moves.

Anyway, it's time to head to the union. The sun is setting when I emerge from the underground. I spent a lot of time crafting all those items.

I deposit all my gold with the union, except for the 200,000 for my saddle, then give them my crafting products to sell.

I message Mr. Dentelle before heading to his shop.

"Oh, there you are," he greets me.

"Good day. I'm here to purchase my saddle."

"That'll be 200,000 gold."

"Here you go."

"Thanks a bunch."

I immediately use the UI to equip the saddle to my horse and wyvern. This won't work if they're summoned as skeletons, so I'll make them zombies.

Having a saddle apparently modifies all Horseback skills, making mounts easier to ride.

"Oh yeah, that reminds me. I bought one of those talismans and unlocked the skills," says Mr. Dentelle.

"I'm glad to hear that. So you fulfilled the requirements?" I ask.

"I wanted to gather materials for them as soon as possible, but it's really hard to craft any real number of them. Maybe it would be better with cultivation skills."

"Did you take those?"

"Yep. I can see myself using them a lot. I could probably fill up a bunch of rooms with plants. Actually, I *definitely* would."

Buying just a few plants can result in many more if you cultivate them and allow them to reproduce. The problem seems to be an issue of land space when adding more rooms to your house.

"There's another thing I'm working on too. I'm now looking to make dresses and maid uniforms," he informs me.

"You are?"

"Yes, I learned that arachne players can make spider silk. I'm waiting for a delivery of it."

"Spider silk... I see. Is it special at all?"

"Spider silk is for close-range attackers. Wild mana silk is for those who battle from a distance. Then there's royal mana silk, which works for anyone. If you don't know what to pick, you go with royal! But then there's that price tag."

"Have Eli and Abby prepared enough money?"

"I told them how much it costs, so I just thought I'd mention it to you too."

"I see. I appreciate that."

After a bit of chatting, I leave Mr. Dentelle's store.

Walking underneath the orange sky, I happen to look west... But is something coming at me? It's a girl riding on a broomstick, just like a witch! She has a green marker, which tells me she's a resident.

I remember when my master told me that witches would probably want to swarm me... Is that finally happening? If so, then the girl I saw yesterday was probably a witch too.

I'm sure she wants my water of reminiscence. However, there's no need for me to have any direct interaction with her. The people who died and came back are taking the water with them too, after all. Though I suppose the witch might prefer a higher-quality version.

The witch girl, with beautiful silver hair and blue eyes, comes straight toward me.

"I sense a deep, rich feeling of death... You're high undead. I want to know your name," she says to me.

The witch has a pleasant voice, but she seems a bit laid-back. I suspect she's the type of girl who rarely changes her facial expression, marching to the beat of her own drum.

I also heard that many witches could be described as eccentric scientists.

"I'm Anastasia Atropos Nemeseia."

"Nemeseia...! Even I haven't met one before. I'm so lucky... It's an honor to meet you."

She tells me that her name is Sophie Lilywhite Sorciere.

"It's nice to meet you, Ms. Sorciere."

"Hmm... No. That sounds too much like a title. Just call me Sophie."

"Oh my, you're here too, Lady Lilywhite?" comes a new voice. "And I see you've gone straight for this girl... Please try not to bother her too much."

"Uh-huh. Long time no see," Ms. Sophie responds.

Ms. Luciana has arrived at the scene. Since she addressed Ms. Sophie as "Lady," then she must have some sort of position in society. The two also appear to be close.

I wonder why Ms. Sophie said it sounded too much like a title. Hmm... Wait, isn't "sorciere" French for "witch"?

"Are you a witch, Ms. Sophie?" I ask.

"Yep. I'm a witch with the name Sorciere."

That makes it sound like there's a specific meaning to the name itself...

"Ms. Anastasia, do outsiders know about witches?" asks Ms. Luciana.

"I would say the majority don't know anything about them. Ms. Meghan explained a little to me, but not anything about names."

"Then allow me to explain," Ms. Luciana offers.

I decided to let her tell me about it if she's willing. I have no reason to refuse an explanation of witch names.

"Witches have a hierarchy. Apprentice witches are the lowest-ranked and must pass a trial in order to become a fully-fledged witch. Once they've studied medicine and gained their powers, they're referred to as magisa, or master witches. The best of the best magisa become sorciere—unaging witches."

"So that means..."

"Indeed. Lady Lilywhite is an undeniable prodigy known to all her kind. She was the youngest witch in history to become a sorciere. Once witches reach that title, they stop growing and remain at their current age."

I turn to look at Ms. Sophie. She's holding the broom she rode on and smirking proudly, sticking out her flat—no, her *small* chest.

She looks to be about twelve years old in age, wearing a gothic lolita dress with a large hat—black, of course. Yes, she certainly *is* a witch. The fact that she's not wearing black robes makes her look a bit more stylish than most.

"Now I wish I'd grown a bit more first... This only happened because I acted on my emotions."

Ms. Sophie stared at my chest as she spoke, so despite her lack of facial expression, it's very easy to tell how she feels.

Regardless, now I know she's one of the most impressive witches of them all. I should probably assume that, as someone ranked higher than a magisa, she has powers she can fight with too.

"Would you like to stay at the church tonight? Or are you heading to the Marclant home?" Ms. Luciana asks her.

"Hmm... I'll stay at the church. I brought a souvenir," Ms. Sophie responds.

"Then I'll prepare a room for you. Would you like to come right away?"

“Umm...later.”

“Then I’ll head back now.”

“Kay.”

So Ms. Sophie is going to stay at the church? Ms. Luciana is heading home.

I’m quite intrigued by Ms. Sophie’s broom. I doubt the devs would allow me to simply get on and fly without any trouble, but perhaps with the right tools, we players could fly as well.

Ms. Sophie shows me the broom, noticing my gaze is fixed on it. “I put on gravity cores and air thrusters that I found in a dungeon,” she explains.

So they come from dungeons? That catches my interest.

“There’re air thrusters on the front and back, then a gravity core attached to the middle,” she continues. “Once you get used to it, it’s pretty nice, except for the fuel consumption.”

“So it took some practice?” I ask.

“Yeah, I was spinning in circles and getting thrown off for a while.”

I imagine you would have to straddle the metal bar while the thrusters send you in different directions. If you don’t maintain your balance, you just circle until the thrusters send you flying.

That sounds like the developers I’m all too familiar with. They never let me down. How cruel.

“I could have stabilized it if I had more thrusters, but I learned to handle it as it was, so it doesn’t matter” she says.

“Could I make a broom myself?”

“You just need to get the most important parts: the air thrusters and the gravity cores.”

“I see...”

"Also, if you run out of magical energy in the air, you'll fall out of the sky, obviously."

"Ah. Uh-huh..."

"But if you have extra energy, even your magic servants or summoned creatures can ride without trouble."

So it operated with magic. A broom wouldn't function like a glider, so as soon as you ran out of fuel, your fate was a passionate embrace with the ground below you. How very dangerous. Ms. Sophie must have quite a lot of magical energy.

"By the way, I want to see your materials from the Nether," Ms. Sophie says.

"I have five different kinds right now. Let's see..."

I show her each material, one after another: lotuses, water, clay, punica, and nether light.

"These are great items. I want them all, especially that moon nether light. If only they were better quality..."

"At my current skill level, this is all I can come up with."

"If you're a Nemeseia, you should be royalty. You can have someone else gather for you."

"Now that you mention it...that's true. I should find someone to ask." How could I have been so blind?!

"You didn't figure that out?" Ms. Sophie asks me.

"No, I didn't... But I'll do that next time," I respond.

"To thank you for the treasures, I'll research and develop a resurrection potion for outsiders. Once I'm done, I can give you the recipe."

"RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A RESURRECTION POTION FOR OUTSIDERS"

You've caught the interest of living legend Sophie Lilywhite. It might be a good idea to give her the items she's after to win her favor.

1. Give Sophie a moon nether light of A-quality or higher.

Quest conditions: Negotiate with a resident who knows how to craft resurrection potions.

Reward: Recipe for outsiders' resurrection potion.

This is something I definitely have to do... It looks like the advent of resurrection potions is finally upon us.

Although...is this even something I can do right away?

"Ms. Sophie, will you be in this town for a while?" I ask.

"Yeah, that's the plan."

"At the church, right? I'm going to make a trip to the Nether, so let's meet up after that."

"Before you go, sell me the water you have on you."

"Are you sure this quality is good enough?"

"You can change it for some items, so it's fine..."

I can't sell it for very much since all I did was scoop it up from the Nether. I'm not the only one selling it either, so it's very difficult to decide on a price... In fact, it's impossible. This is an MMO, after all. These things fluctuate.

I simply transfer the water to a container she already has. I'll sell any items I gather from here on out if they're higher quality.

Night is falling in the game, so I say goodbye to Ms. Sophie and return to my villa.

Once I arrive, I give a nearby lady-in-waiting three water jugs that I crafted while making magic clay, as well as my infinite canteen after resetting it to the default. She agrees to collect water for me.

While she's away, Eleanora, my personal attendant, arrives next, so I ask her about it too. "I'm looking to obtain A-quality or higher moon nether light. Can you get that for me?"

"Of course. I can prepare it at once if that's what you desire, madam," she replies.

"I do. Please bring me one piece."

"Right away."

The maid with the water returns soon after that. I check the quality and see that it's A+. That's a huge improvement over the water I collect myself. My infinite canteen is now at A+ quality too, so things are looking great. I knew I couldn't hope for S-quality, considering the limitations that come with video games, but A+ was still higher than I expected.

A bit more time passes, and Eleanora returns with a large, beautiful gem. It's moon nether light at the exact same quality: A+. Now I can make some real progress on that quest. Morning in this game comes at 6 a.m., right? I should head to Mr. Ertz's shop first and collect my equipment.

I head to the union again and withdraw 670,000 gold. This leaves my total savings at 200,000. It's gone down quite a bit, but that will change once I collect the profits from my current consignment sales. I just need to be patient.

I arrive at Mr. Ertz's shop.

"Ah, Tasha. Perfect timing."

"Ms. Lapis, right? What is it?" I reply.

"I was hoping you could give me some advice on which equipment to get."

Oh? It's been just about a month since the second-wavers came to the game, so I doubt

she's struggling to choose a weapon type. This must be about materials.

"I'm using bronze right now, but do you think I should change to iron?" she asks me.

"What's your base level right now?"

"I'm at 21."

"Then you should skip iron and go for steel. You upgrade from bronze to steel or from copper to iron. You can assume you won't change weapons once you're above level 20, so ideally, you would use steel. The newest version, high-speed cobalt, is generally for those above level 30, so you'll have to make do with steel until then."

"Then I ought to splurge a little and buy steel items?"

"Steel equipment is discounted right now due to the top players shifting to high-speed cobalt, so it's a good time to buy, although it might be better to wait a little longer."

There's quite a difference in price between steel and high-speed cobalt. Part of the reason is because cobalt is meant for top players and first-wavers, making it that much more expensive, but it's also an alloy composed of five different metals. It costs more to make, so it's sold for a higher price.

First you turn iron to steel, then mix that steel with chrome, cobalt, molybdenum, and vanadium. It's only natural that this process costs more than simply turning iron to steel to make a weapon. You can use the Reproduce art, but labor is still labor.

"Why should I wait?" Ms. Lapis asks.

"Something called halchium was just discovered within the past few days. It will probably turn out to be a better version of high-speed cobalt, so steel might see even more of a price reduction."

"I see... Maybe I *should* wait..."

"Still, a two-handed hammer? You've chosen such a powerful weapon."

"Well, y'know, it's easy to just smack anything in your way. I haven't played many video games before, after all."

"I see. A one-handed sword and shield are thought of as the norm, but I suppose a two-handed hammer is simpler."

When cutting something with a sword, you have to take certain things into consideration, like the efficiency and angle with which you choose to cut. Using a sword requires you to know these techniques. Japanese swords seem to have a big influence too.

In comparison, hammers are blunt weapons that you simply need to hit with. However, blunt weapons *do* require you to use techniques that give you clean hits. The weapon on Ms. Lapis' back appears to be a two-handed hammer, or "war hammer." It's a very simple weapon, as she doesn't even have to worry about blocking attacks with a shield. All she does is smash it as hard as she can.

"Oh, there you are. Your stuff's ready," Mr. Ertz informs me.

"Then 670,000 gold will do, yes?" I ask.

"Yep."

"I received some money from consignment, so I brought it with me."

"This helped me level my skills a nice bit. I've got magi iron for you too."

We trade gold for equipment, then I immediately transfer that equipment to Secret Art of Necromancy and change out my template equipment.

Then I summon a living armor with halchium equipment.

"How do you feel, Unit One? Is this acceptable?" I ask.

CLACK CLACK

"Looks like everything's good."

I recall the living armor and update the template. Then I summon a skeleton.

"Any problems?"

CLACK CLACK

"In that case, *Change Arms*."

Unit One places the one-handed hammer and shield into the magic circle that appears in front of him, from which he then retrieves a two-handed hammer.

"Does that work all right?" I confirm with him.

CLICK

"No...?"

Unit One can't exactly speak, so he uses his body to communicate the issue. He motions in a way to indicate lifting something up.

"It's heavy? Is it a weight issue?"

CLICK

"You're not strong enough?"

CLICK

"Ah, now that I think of it, halchium must be heavier due to how sturdy it is."

Hmm...well, I should fix that. I dismiss Unit One, then re-summon him as a zombie instead of a skeleton.

"Any problems?" I ask him.

CLACK CLACK

"I see... So it's a weakness of the skeleton body? I suppose I'll have to give light weapons to skeletons and heavy weapons to zombies, then."

I dismiss and re-summon Unit One yet again, this time as a skeleton wolf.

"How does it feel like that?"

CLACK CLACK

“Everything’s good?”

CLICK

“Hmm... Maybe that’s because you have four legs this time? Skeletons might be different depending on their body structure...”

I adjust the template a bit and save it that way.

It looks like my bronze one-handed hammer and zelkova round shield are out of the question. I have Mr. Ertz take them from me.

“So high-speed cobalt is lighter than halchium, but that’s what makes them balanced?” he asks. “I’ll need to test the alloy too... Okay, I’m headin’ back to work.”

“All right. Thank you for the help,” I reply.

“You got it!”

Mr. Ertz locks himself away in his workshop.

“Wow, you can pay a bill of 670,000 gold? First-wavers are amazing!” cries Ms. Lapis.

“I produce items too, which allows me to save money. This equipment is for my servants, and since there’s more than one of them, it really raises the price,” I reply.

“I’m curious about that summoning stuff.”

“It’s sort of its own game to cultivate them. You have to make them battle enemies and feed them—even how you treat them in general can cause slight differences.”

“I’m always a little jealous when I see people walking around carrying rabbits.”

“Even the skeletons are cute when you really look at them.”

“I’m not really into skeletons...” Ms. Lapis says.

“But don’t you think the mini-skeletons are cute?”

“Well...maybe so, but just a little bit.”

"They're sort of cartoon-like and everything." My mini-skeleton is a worker, which makes him even more unique.

I spend a bit more time with Ms. Lapis, chatting and killing time. I mostly just teach her how to use the BBS, as it's very handy for gathering information. However, she also needed to be warned not to believe everything she reads.

"Anyway, it's morning in the game now, so I'm going to go finish my errands," I tell her.

"Right. Thanks for everything."

"Of course. Until next time."

Now that the sun is up, I leave Ms. Lapis, head to the church, and ask a nearby nun to bring Ms. Sophie out to me.

After some time, a sleepy-looking Ms. Sophie trots out to where I am.

"Good morning. I'm here to deliver the goods you asked for!"

With that, I set out the three water jars. *That* woke her up. Her sleepy eyes are now sparkling with light. I hand her the moon nether light as well.

"Wow... They're great! The royal family is on a different level..." she says in awe.

"Are they to your satisfaction?" I ask her.

"Yeah, they're perfect. I'll keep my promise..."

"RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A RESURRECTION POTION FOR OUTSIDERS"

You've caught the interest of living legend Sophie Lilywhite. It might be a good idea to give her the items she's after to win her favor.

1. Give Sophie a moon nether light of A-quality or higher.

2. Allow her to witness three outsider deaths.

Quest conditions: Negotiate with a resident who knows how to craft resurrection potions.

Reward: Recipe for outsiders' resurrection potion.

Wait...is that quest text telling me this girl wants to watch people die? Am I going to have to camp outside the Starting Town gates and hunt down outsiders? That's too brutal! I can't do that!

I could try to die myself three times, but I would have to turn off my own skills to do so, which makes it difficult to do here. When Light was my weakness, I could have turned off my automatic HP regen and died that way, but it's not possible anymore...

Hmm... Maybe it's time to use my personal forum? Those people don't seem like they would mind dying for me. I'll ask three people to participate and reward them each 20,000 gold or so. That's a much better idea.

A few minutes on the BBS later, I've got my assistants. That sure was fast.

"Ms. Sophie, we're going to meet up at the north gate, so let's stop by the union and then head out that way."

"Kay."

I take out 60,000 gold to reward my willing victims with, then travel to the north gate.

It looks like they're already here. These guys really *are* fast.

"Thank you for your help," I greet them.

"Leave it to us!" cry all three players.

The three have already deposited all their money on hand at the union and changed into starter equipment that has no durability. They're ready to go.

"It may be starter equipment, but a rabbit might still take time to kill me. I think it'd

be faster for you to attack us, Princess," one of the players suggests.

"Which means..." Ms. Sophie and I say simultaneously.

"Come and get us!" they all cheer.

"Ah, okay, I will."

"One at a time, please," Ms. Sophie reminds me.

"Very well."

I don't know why they're so excited about this, but I'll kill them one at a time as instructed. I don't want this to be counted as PKing either, so I switch to duel mode and set down a duel marker. Once I set the victory conditions to HP=1, the duel will end as soon as the player is just about dead, so I'll have these three players go without healing and allow a nearby rabbit to finish them off.

I carry out my mission as Ms. Sophie instructs.

"Huh... Okay, I get it. Now for the materials..."

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1. Give Sophie a moon nether light of A-quality or higher.

2. Allow her to witness three outsider deaths.

3. Gather and hand over the items she asks for.

Quest conditions: Negotiate with a resident who knows how to craft resurrection potions.

Reward: Recipe for outsiders' resurrection potion.

So it's crystal lotus, water of reminiscence, and holy punica? Those are all Nether materials... I can probably just give her the ones I have on hand.

"Did it work?" one of the players asks me.

"Yes, and thank you for the help. I'll distribute your rewards now."

"Twenty thousand gold for a single death? Talk about an easy gig."

Residents would probably see such a deal as utterly ridiculous.

Once all the players are back, I distribute their payouts before following Ms. Sophie to Ms. Meghan's shop.

"I'm here," Ms. Sophie announces.

"I thought you might come by. So she really caught you already...?" asks Ms. Meghan.

Master, why are you staring at me with such a look of pity?

"I need someone with Alchemy knowledge," the witch states.

"All you ever bring are problems," Ms. Meghan retorts.

"I made an Alchemy recipe for an outsiders' resurrection potion. Would you please create one?"

It appeared that Ms. Sophie was doing the Compounding and getting Ms. Meghan to do the Alchemy for her.

Ms. Meghan let out a sigh, but it looked like she was willing to help.

"Come to the church after sunset," Ms. Sophie instructs me.

"Very well."

"RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT OF A RESURRECTION POTION FOR OUTSIDERS"

You've caught the interest of living legend Sophie Lilywhite. It might be a good idea to give her the items she's after to win her favor.

1. Give Sophie a moon nether light of A-quality or higher.

2. Allow her to witness three outsider deaths.

3. Gather and hand over the items she asks for.

4. Meet with Sophie after sunset and receive the recipe.

Quest conditions: Negotiate with a resident who knows how to craft resurrection potions.

Reward: Recipe for outsiders' resurrection potion.

I see. So all that's left is to pick it up later?

After sunset would make it 9 p.m. or later in the real world. That means I can receive the potion before I go to bed.

I exit Ms. Meghan's shop. What should I do until dinnertime? I may as well spend the day crafting and earn some money... Actually, no. I'll summon the Pup Lord and do some studying. That sounds like a better option.

I teleport to my villa. Will I be able to summon him with a mini-statue?

"Lord of Tindalos, please teach me Mythical Languages," I entreat him.

Wow. He showed right up.

"Are you ready?" he asks me.

"Yes. Please teach me until it's dinnertime for my other body."

"Very well."

We use the mini-statue to warp to my room in the villa.

Once we arrive, my ladies-in-waiting bow their heads in one corner of the room. They seem to be in more proper form than usual, perhaps because the Pup Lord is here.

With that, the Lord of Tindalos begins his Mythical Languages lesson. On a visual level, our lessons look a little ridiculous, but you can't mind such things when interacting with the outer ones.



While he's here, I should ask him about his role in this world. I could run into issues if I don't learn how he differs from his source material.

First things first: the Cthulhu Mythos from which he comes.

There are the Lords of Tindalos and Hounds of Tindalos. They're very famous beings who are probably known by anyone who so much as dabbles in the Cthulhu Mythos.

In fact, they're actually beings of different races. "Tindalos" is the name of a separate dimension, or perhaps a parallel universe. It's not stated clearly, but it's probably fine to simply think of it as the name of a region. Thus, the Lords of Tindalos and Hounds of Tindalos are separate beings. Since these are names of races, the fact that one bears the title of "lord" doesn't mean that only one of him exists.

Despite being called "hounds," these beings only look that way to humans. They aren't dogs, nor do they possess physical bodies of flesh and bone. That means the title "Pup Lord" isn't accurate, but it's more fun to think about them that way. They're hounds because they look like dogs. Dogs are pups. The Lords of Tindalos are lord versions of the hounds, hence "Pup Lord."

...Not that these beings are cute as the name suggests.

The lords are said to reside in the angles of time. That might make you say, "Huh?" but that's the official backstory. It's something you're supposed to "sense," not comprehend. Just roll with it.

Angles up to 120 degrees are their domain, with which they can teleport through hyperspace. Human rooms are generally box-shaped, which gives them corners. That's how the Tindalos beings sneak in. They can only travel through angles, but not only is the distance unlimited, they can cross timelines as well. In the terms of this game, they would be professionals at Space Magic.

Most things that summon the Hounds relate to time and space. That would include peering into the past or future, or perhaps teleporting. If you meet their eyes during these moments, they'll chase you down and kill you no matter what.

Now, there's a lore issue in this game between the Hounds and Stellura. The players have hypothesized that Stellura is likely based on Yog-Sothoth, the vice-lord of the Cthulhu mythos. In fact, the book about Stellura I read in the Evernight Castle all but confirmed it with its depiction of her.

Yog-Sothoth is described as being like “an iridescent mass of orbs, constantly separating and attaching to change shape.” This puts him at extreme odds with Tindalos beings and their use of angles. Yog-Sothoth represents “curved time” while the lords represent “angular time.”

However, in this game, they appear to be more like messengers of Stellura. That’s why I really need to ask about their relationship in this game or else I could find myself in big trouble without even knowing why.

What else...? The lords generally smell like a morgue and make those around them nauseated, but that doesn’t seem to be the case in this game. It’s also possible that they possess some sort of skill for that and have it turned off.

Anyway, that’s their canon backstory. What matters most is how they function in-game.

The Lord of Tindalos tells me that there is a region in the Medium where they reside. That’s one area under Stellura’s jurisdiction that I’ve seen mentioned a few times now. It’s supposed to be like a paradise, as there are places within the Medium prepared for each race. Such lavish hospitality. It’s on a totally different scale. In other words, the Medium must be extremely large and very chaotic!

The Lord of Tindalos generally has the same powers as in the original mythos, but he’s friendly in this world instead of hostile. Rather than killing all space-time travelers, he only kills people who break a contract. The lords move in packs, refusing to give up even if repelled, and it sounds like sometimes they can even dispatch higher outer ones. In a way, it sounds like they’re even worse than in the original stories. This is the real reason why the clergy tries to prevent against corruption.

Out of Tindalos came the hounds, lords, and what else...? Wasn’t there the arch-lord who fights with Yog-Sothoth? He’s supposed to be the strongest of all the Lords of Tindalos.

“Lord, do you have an individual name?” I ask.

“Who, me? I am Mh’ithrha. What of it?”

Ah. Okay. That was the name of the arch-lord of Tindalos, wasn’t it? I’m learning languages from the arch-lord himself. What a strange situation... Ah, wait. I’m a ruler too. I’m not one to comment on the arch-lord.

Regardless of his identity, I have no problems so long as he's friendly. I just need to be sure not to pick a fight with him. He's also at max level, so he could kill me in the blink of an eye.

I feel like I've gained enough information from him, so I'll work on leveling up this skill.

It's just about dinnertime. That's enough studying for now.

Let's see... That was about three hours? That's half a day within the game. If Mythical Languages is at level 5 now, it must take an entire in-game day to reach level 10. Language skills feel like they increase more in terms of percentage than levels. Would it really take sixty IRL hours to reach level 100...? Two days and twelve hours? Compared to other MMOs, that's not bad at all. I'll have to ask the Pup Lord for study help here and there.

"That reminds me. Did you take Holy Magic?" asks the arch-lord.

"No. My servants and I can't use it, so it would be a real struggle to level it up."

"Hm. While it isn't compulsory for those of faith, if you want to come with us, you will have more options with Holy Magic."

He must be talking about a new evolution, right? I want to know more about that. It's a very important matter, as evolutions can't be undone.

"There are different kinds of faith," he continues. "What specific advice can I give you...? Ah, it is like the many different faces of Stellura. Which face will you choose?"

Face...? Ah, I see. I just read about that in the book. Stellura's the goddess who governs light and darkness, life and death, time, space, fate, contracts and judgment. Those were her faces, so he's probably asking which of those I would choose.

"I see... I'm curious about time, space, and fate, but if I really had to pick one, I think I'd want contracts and judgment."

"Oh, but why have you chosen those? Can you explain? A strong will is important."

"Well, 'carrying out a contract' is a specific concept. The rest are sort of complex. I can imagine it in my head, while things like time, space, and fate are harder to comprehend."

"Mm. I see how you feel. Very well. What is most important is to have faith that the gods are watching and to not act in ways that will bring you shame. To put it more clearly, only act in ways where you could still look your parents in the eyes afterward. There is no need to overcomplicate faith."

It's really weird how, despite his looks, the arch-lord of Tindalos gives great advice. Maybe I should keep my eyes closed and just listen to his voice.

Putting that aside, I want to know what Holy Magic relates to.

"There is an internal, emotional side of what I just described," he explains. "It is mental readiness. But skills including Holy Magic are for the other, physical issues. Both are important for evolutions that involve faith," explains the arch-lord.

"I see. So you're saying I should take it regardless of my skill level?"

"A high skill level is best, but you are right. Having the skill itself matters. If you come to us with Holy Magic, there will be an effect."

"Ah, I see."

"However, the downside is that your other attributes will be crushed."

"You mean I won't be able to use them?"

"Correct. You will receive high modifiers to Light and Dark magic, but the rest will be destroyed. Be sure to choose carefully whether or not to come to our side. Sometimes, it is good to stop and think."

So in my case, I would receive maximum Light and Dark modifiers, while the rest of my elements would be locked away. This appears to change based on what you evolved from and which god you're devoted to, especially the latter.

Those who did not fall into the logic of this world and its reincarnation cycle were apparently given the title of outer ones. That means they're not only messengers of Stellura but of Sigdrifa and Haventhys as well. However, those in the Medium are

Stellura's devoted outer ones. In other words, that place is probably only for the Cthulhu-related beings.

The other factor is the player's race. I don't know what will happen in my case, but the arch-lord tells me that he can't give me advice in this area.

"With that, I will now go back," he announces.

"All right. Please teach me again sometime," I reply.

"Mm-hmm."

He disappears through a corner of the room, so now would be a good time for me to log out and have dinner. Mom should be home tonight.

"Sis!" cries Rina.

"Yes?"

"There's gonna be a new update."

"I know."

"They're letting in third-wavers!"

"So I've heard. How many are coming?"

"They say they're gonna lift entry limitations and let anyone in the country in!"

"Ah, is that right?" I respond.

"So there's gonna be a whole maintenance day starting at 6 a.m. on September 1st," she informs me.

"Maintenance ends on the 2nd?"

"Yep. It'll be over about 6 a.m. I think they're changing servers or something? Mr. Yamamoto said he'd be doing another livestream to pass the time."

"Then he'll probably explain things there."

Mr. Yamamoto is one of the people in charge of the game. He's more of an administrator than an engineer, which means he has nothing to do during maintenance either...so long as it proceeds as planned, of course. I'm sure it's not fun to have to manage all those developers with their strong personalities.

It sounds like this is going to be a large-scale hardware update.

"It said that flavor text to describe each race's base stats is going to be added to the game," Rina tells me.

"Wow... Although I doubt it will reveal too many details."

"Yeah, it's probably just an outline."

The two of us chat back and forth as we eat our dinner. Oh, I just remembered something.

"By the way, I think I'm going to be able to craft resurrection potions," I tell Rina.

"What? *What??!*"

"I'm going to spend the day crafting them tomorrow, then I'll sell them on consignment before I go to bed and post the recipe on the BBS."

"So is this Alchemy?"

"It's either Compounding or Alchemy, from what I've learned. You can get a special quest from a resident to have her make resurrection potions for outsiders. I'm going to finish it just before I go to bed."

"Oh, a quest?! That reminds me. You were recruiting players to help you on the BBS, right? That must be why you asked people to die for you."

"The conditions involve interacting with a witch," I explain.

"I saw a post saying you were with a pretty young girl with silver hair. Was that the witch?" Rina asks me.

"Yep. She's famous in that world and is supposed to be an unaging witch—a prodigy too. Being rude to her could cause you to lose your place in society, so you ought to be

careful. Her level is really high too."

"Unaging... So she's a legal loli?!"

"I didn't ask her real age, so I can't say."

Cuteness is righteousness. I tell Rina about witches' names while I'm at it.

I think I'll also mention those on the BBS when I submit the resurrection potion recipe. I feel like it could become a bit of a headache for people if they don't know about witches.

"How much are you selling them for? I want one," Rina tells me.

"I'm going to consult with Ms. Salute and other crafters about that tomorrow. I think they'll be cheap, considering the ingredients."

"Whoa. I'll go buy them if I can."

"It will probably be after I've had lunch. Don't tell anyone outside your party, okay?"

"Not until you go to bed, Sis."

"Don't forget to prepare for school. It'll be starting soon, so get your uniforms out and make sure they're ready," Mom instructs us.

"Awww... Paradise comes to an end in four days..."

"It'll be winter break in no time," Mom reassures us.

Mom is right. It's probably about time I fish my uniform out of the wardrobe.

I finish dinner, take my bath, wrap up my nighttime routine, and check the time. Then I log back in.

I go straight to the church and have them bring me Ms. Sophie.

"Yep. Here's your reward..."

I claim the two pieces of paper and look them over.

You have learned the basic Compounding recipe: "Resurrection potion for outsiders."

You have learned the basic Alchemy recipe: "Resurrection potion for outsiders."

Quest: "Research and development of a resurrection potion for outsiders" completed.

"They look great. Thank you very much," I say to Ms. Sophie.

"Use them how you like. Just don't lose them."

"Of course. I'll keep them at home."

Ms. Sophie asks me to bring her materials with each trip I make to drop off holy punicas at the church. It sounds like she's prepared to live at the church for some time now. Well, it's a normal business deal, so I'm sure it's not an issue. I'll have to tell my ladies-in-waiting about my schedule so they can prepare more items. That means all I'll have to do is make the deliveries myself.

"All right. I'll bring you items when I drop off the punicas."

"Thanks. Mmm...I'm gonna dream good tonight."

"Good night, then."

I say goodbye to the cheerful Ms. Sophie and head straight to my villa.

The two sheets of paper she gave me read: "From Sophie Lilywhite Sorciere, to Anastasia Atropos Nemeseia for bringing me moon nether light." There's more that says "Crafting rights go to me, but I'll hand over all sales rights."

So these recipes include something of a contract in them. She wants to be known as the person who made the recipes, but I can do as I please with them otherwise.

I ask my ladies-in-waiting to gather ingredients to bring to the church, as they seem to be suffering from idleness. They must have been bored to death before all this. I suppose they were already dead, though. I ask them to gather enough ingredients for me to craft resurrection potions too.

It's a bit early, but I think I'll head to bed now.

Good night.

CHAPTER 5

SUNDAY

I WAKE UP IN THE MORNING and start to log in, then abruptly stop. Gaming will have to wait a bit. I need to do some exercise today. I don't want to gain weight, so I just need to find some way to move my body.

I exercise, eat breakfast, and finish my other little tasks before logging in for the morning.

"Good morning. I've carried your materials to your Alchemy room."

"Thank you. I'll let you know if I still need more."

My ladies-in-waiting sure are capable! Employed residents seem like they would go as far as to harvest my fields, but apparently, they have certain skills already when you hire them. Those skills can affect the price of things too.

Mining from my ore vein helps me level my skills, so I won't ask them to do that for me. I collect the ore from my vein before beginning to craft.

I combine crystal lotus, holy punica, and water of reminiscence.

Oh dear... My magical energy isn't running wild, since there's no magic stone, but this is still very tricky. My plan is to make a lot of these potions, so I'll probably get the hang of it along the way.

[RESTORATION] RESURRECTION POTION

Rarity: RA Quality: B

Revives the target with 65% of their HP. Simply pour it over them.

The revived target will not be able to be revived again for 10 minutes in real time.

Exclusive use for outsiders.

B-quality, huh? That's not so great, considering the modifiers. I feel like it should be A-tier with the quality of the items I used... Oh well. I just need to get the hang of it, and I'm sure I'll reach that level eventually.

Time to craft some more!

Alchemist has reached level 30. You have gained 2 skill points.

You have acquired the art Phase Change through Alchemist.

PHASE CHANGE:

Change an item's state of matter to either liquid, solid, or gas.

I see... I'm sure I could use this for plenty of things, but I'll think about that later.

The more I make these resurrection potions, the more I see that potion quality seems to have an effect on the amount of HP you respawn with. I would guess that C-tier potions revive you with 50 percent HP. One change in grade seems to move that number up or down 5 percent, so that would mean S+ potions restore 100 percent HP, right? Not that I've managed to make any S-tier potions yet.

If all my ingredients are A+ and I still can't get that high, even in my Alchemy room, I must be missing something. Residents only provide the basic recipes, after all.

Since it's a liquid potion, maybe I should turn all my ingredients to liquid first? I'll give Phase Change a try.

I place my ingredients in the Alchemy circle and liquefy them with Phase Change. They're now floating as three orbs above the circle, so I use Synthesize on them in that

state.

This seems to make things go more smoothly. I'll have to try it this way a few times.

I continue to produce potions, all the while requesting more ingredients from my ladies-in-waiting.

[RESTORATION] BLESS POTION

Rarity: EP Quality: S-

Revives the target with 100% of their HP. Simply pour it over them.

The revived target will not be able to be revived again for 10 minutes in real time.

Exclusive use for outsiders.

Oh? The potion's name changed...

S-quality restores 100 percent HP? That's a big jump in numbers, meaning something else must still change from here... It can only be a reduction in time between revivals, I assume.

It's 11 a.m. in real life. I see that Mr. Ertz, Mr. Dentelle, Ms. Salute, Ms. Primura, and Ms. Nephrite have logged in. I'll message a few of them.

"Hey, what's the group chat for?" asks Mr. Ertz.

"I wanted the wisdom of the top players. I need to consult you on an item price."

"That's unlike you! Did you get something crazy?" asks Ms. Primura.

Well, she's right, in a way. It is pretty crazy.

"I've managed to make a resurrection potion, and I'm not sure how much to sell it for," I explain.

"Really?! If you're making it, then it must be Alchemy, right?!" Ms. Primura asks me.

"There's also a Compounding recipe that you can have, Ms. Salute."

"Are you serious?!" she cries.

"It's hard to craft enough of these alone, after all. I couldn't exactly monopolize an item like this, so I figured I could at least get a single day's head start."

I give them all the same explanation I gave my sister, then show them two screenshots that demonstrate the changes that come with potion quality. There's the resurrection potion and the bless potion.

"Whoaa! S-tier!" they all cry in unison.

"All of my ingredients were A+. That was possible for me since they're all Nether items."

"What does it take?" Ms. Salute asks.

"Crystal lotus, holy punica, and water of reminiscence. Here's the recipe."

I'll go ahead and share the ingredients with Ms. Salute. I'm curious if potion quality is the only factor that results in the name change.

"I'll come get them from you now!" she tells me.

"Sure. I'm at home right now."

"Got it!"

"What about their price...? How much is the market price for the ingredients?" asks Mr. Ertz.

"Those three alone are cheap, but they're usually never found higher than C-tier..." Ms. Primura remarks.

"It must be difficult to make too, right?" Ms. Nephrite adds.

"Yeah. What's the Alchemy version like, Princess?"

While the other three discuss pricing, I answer Mr. Dentelle's question. "Let's see... It's not difficult in the way that items with magic stones are, but it's still tricky in its own way. I also couldn't get it to S-tier without using an art that came with level 30 of Alchemist. I don't know if that's required or if there's some trick to it."

"I see..."

Salute has arrived for a visit.

I have my ladies-in-waiting hand over the ingredients to Ms. Salute and send her on her way.

"*Shall we get crafting?*" asks Ms. Nephrite.

"*The higher the potion quality, the fewer accidental deaths you'll have after respawning,*" Mr. Ertz comments.

"*True. But at the current level, it's not like you'll get half your HP taken all at once...*" Mr. Dentelle replies.

"*Still, it's a big deal in battles to be able to use an item instead of restoration magic to heal.*"

"I guess that's true."

Resurrection potions are a staple of video games, and we've only just discovered them in this one. It comes with a lot to think about. The cooldown time is pretty long, so each person should probably carry two or three potions on them. In fact, if you're going to die more than that, you probably shouldn't be hanging out in the hunting grounds anyway.

Perhaps it's good insurance for berserker skills. It should make using them a little easier.

"Whoa! Are you kidding me? My crafting failed," reports Ms. Salute.

"Does it seem difficult?"

"I've seen it once now, so I should be okay. I might just need to get the hang of it."

It goes without saying that Compounding and Alchemy have completely different crafting methods. I can't give any advice in that regard. They'll just have to do their best.

"So make an adjustment here, then judging by the way it's written, you have to find the right timing... Now!"

"Judging by the materials and production difficulty, I think 600 gold for C-quality seems fair."

"Whoa, A-? I want to figure out if ingredient quality affects the finished product, but I think that will have to wait..."

"You got A-? If C is 50 percent then A- is 75 percent, right? You could raise it 50 gold per grade and price it at 850."

If I use Mr. Ertz's method, that would make my S-tier potion worth 1,000 gold.

"I think you could raise the prices of A- and S-tier potions, since it's so difficult to craft them," Ms. Nephrite suggests.

"They'll probably go even higher, depending on what effects ingredient quality has on the finished potion. We just don't know any of the rules for that stuff yet," adds Mr. Dentelle.

Ms. Nephrite has a good point. As does Mr. Dentelle. Nether materials might come in handy for figuring this sort of thing out.

"Shall I bump A-tier potions up to 1,000 gold, since they restore 80 percent HP?"

"Reproduce only works up to B-tiers, so I think you ought to increase A- and higher!" Ms. Primura responds.

"You mean raise it 200 each grade after B+? That makes A- 1,000 gold. It's pretty hard to reach those levels," adds Ms. Salute.

I'd completely forgotten about the limitation on Reproduce. Using that art also reduces EXP earned, which is why I rarely use it and didn't remember that rule.

If I go by Ms. Salute's pricing, that would make C-tier potions start at 600 gold, then raise 50 gold per each grade up to B+. At A-, I raise it another 200 gold to get to a price tag of 1,000. A+ would cost 1,400.

"Shall I raise my S-tiers even higher, since they give complete HP recovery?"

"I don't see why not. You could bump it up 400 gold and charge 1,800."

"That would make S+ worth 2,600 gold? I look forward to that since I can only reach S- for now. I'll sell my potions on consignment before I go to bed and use the prices we agreed on."

"Can I sell mine too? I don't mind waiting a few days," asks Ms. Salute.

"Sure, I'd be fine if you spent today just crafting as many potions as you can. Please go ahead and do that. I'm sure you'll be able to earn lots of money that way. I'll also limit my purchases to three potions per customer."

"My goal is to spread them to as many people as possible. I'm sure yours will sell out as soon as you go to bed, Princess, so I'll put mine up after that. Between the time it takes to make them and how easy it is to get the materials, I should be able to sell plenty."

"Yeah, it's a great item to have on hand. Resurrection potions are like household medicine," Mr. Dentelle adds.

I understand exactly what he means. These potions will bring peace of mind to those who carry them.

"By the way, Princess. We crafters have group meetings sometimes. Do you wanna join us?" asks Mr. Ertz.

"Me? My Cooking skills have been surpassed by others, so I'm not exactly a top producer"

"But you're a top player. We don't really have rules either. It's just that the ingredients you deal with are really important, and besides, you use both Alchemy and Cooking, right?"

"Ah, I see. The ingredients are important."

"We call it a meeting, but it's really a tea party!" exclaims Ms. Primura.

"The goal is to share information and relax. That's all it is."

"We buy cooking items, bring them to the meeting, and brag about our new creations and gardens!"

"We hold it on either a Saturday or Sunday, and everyone who tells us they want to participate the week before gets invited. Attendance isn't mandatory, of course, so prioritize your real-life stuff first. We meet at our guests' houses."

"So that's why you brag about your gardens."

I didn't have any problem with attending. I can do my own cooking, and it's not like I have any reason to refuse. I agree to join their meetings.

"Then let's invite the princess next time," Mr. Ertz offers.

"Okay!" the other four answer in unison.

"Princess, are there gems in the Nether?" asks Ms. Nephrite.

"Gems? The native gem is the moon nether light."

"So you have some? Can you sell them to me?"

"Me too! I think I can use them for staves," Ms. Primura joins in.

"Then I'll have my ladies-in-waiting prepare some."

Ms. Nephrite and Ms. Primura must want to make accessories and magic catalysts.

"So you don't employ people for it? You just use your maids?"

"They seem like they want more things to do, so they bring me materials whenever I ask."

"Yeah, that's castle life, all right. Talk about convenient."

"They can't bring me S-tier items, so I assume the game wants me to find those myself. Aside from the water, most of the items have very limited uses, which is probably why I'm able to obtain them so easily."

"It's a video game, so you can't do much about that. You'll run out of things to do if you don't have some limits."

Indeed, you would quickly grow tired of the game at that rate. The most fun parts are when you're trying to find the things you lack.

"By the way, I asked my teacher about magi iron and learned that it mainly comes from dungeons," says Mr. Ertz.

"Really? Dungeons...?"

"They told me that dungeons have a high concentration of mana. It's easy to get magi iron there but difficult to come out alive, apparently."

"So magi iron must be considered a rare ore in this world."

"Yeah, that's right. It sounds like it sells for a pretty penny. It also needs to be processed in an environment owned by someone with magical energy. Ah, I should mention, one famous metal with magical energy is apparently 'mithril.' Magi iron has the highest output, which is why it's the cheapest."

"That means if you raise the mana concentration... No, if I raise my own level, I might be able to mine mithril from my ore vein?"

"Sounds like it. That's my hope too. Ore drops depend on the vein's owner, after all."

The ores acquired change based on base level and skill levels, so I should be able to mine some mithril once I get there. I look forward to doing that in the future.

"By the way, Ms. Salute..."

"Yes?"

"There are witches in Starting Town right now."

"There are what?!"

"I was going to mention them when I release the information about resurrection potions, but I'll let you know in advance."

I give her the same information that I gave my sister.

Ms. Sophie doesn't seem like she's going to take any students, but there are other witches here too, judging by how Ms. Luciana said, "You're here *too*, Lady Lilywhite?"

"I see... So their names change..."

"But not when they're apprentices, apparently."

"Not because it's too long, but because they're not real witches yet? Well, thanks for the info. I'll do my best."

I've nailed down my prices and told everyone about the information I wanted to share. Did I have anything else to do?

"*Oh yeah. Princess, did you remember to exchange your event points?*" asks Ms. Primura.

"Ah... No, I still have some. There weren't any items I really wanted."

"What about housing things? They've got saplings for tea and stuff."

"Oh, do they really? I already exchanged some points for tea leaves."

"You can search the prizes and sort by 'housing' category!"

"You're right... Black tea, green tea... They even have saplings for fruit trees and medicinal herbs?"

"You'll lose all your points soon anyway, so be sure to use them if you've got extra!"

"Yes, I will. I just pray that the plants don't degrade..."

"Oh, right...you live on unique land. I dunno about any of that. Ah ha ha ha ha!"

As she says, I do have enough points to use the remainder on these saplings.

"Are you able to take care of the fields?" I ask a lady-in-waiting.

“Of course. We have a gardener here.”

“I guess it’s better to have the plants than go without... I’ll go ahead and exchange my points.”

Considering their mana density, they’re probably materials that help with MP recovery.

It would probably be faster to consult the gardener instead of judging the flavor text on its own. I’ll have to do that later.

“Okay, I’m going to go have lunch now.”

“*See ya!*”

I end the voice chat and log out of the game.

I eat lunch with my sister and tell her to come to my house now that I’ve made some resurrection potions.

Once we finish lunch and log back in, I sell the potions to Rina and sell moon nether light to Ms. Primura and Ms. Nephrite. Then I spend my time crafting one resurrection potion after another.

Next, I head to the union so that I can go straight to bed after dinner. I collect the profits from my cooking, talismans, and magic clay, then put my resurrection potions up for sale.

After that, I make some posts on the BBS. With that, I’ve achieved all of my goals. An uneventful day that goes entirely as planned is proof of a peaceful life. What a lovely thing.

Good night.

OFFICIAL BBS 4

[Environmental destruction] Comprehensive Production Chat Thread 79 [After the dream]

1. Nameless Crafter

This is a thread to discuss production.

Please talk about production here.

Also check the boards for each skill.

Previous thread: http://*****

Smithing: http://*****

Carpentry: http://*****

Needlework: http://*****

...etc.

>>980 Next thread's in your hands!

562. Nameless Crafter

The princess is walking around with a silver-haired, blue-eyed gothic lolita girl.

563. Nameless Crafter

Sh-she's what?!

564. Nameless Crafter

Is the girl a player?

565. Nameless Crafter

No, she's a resident. I don't know her name, but her level is crazy high.

566. Nameless Crafter

The highest levels we've seen so far were the outer ones and undead in the Nether, right?

567. Nameless Crafter

I just saw her. Level 86? That's considered to be hero class, lmao.

568. Nameless Crafter

Huh? Is she the highest of any human?

569. Nameless Crafter

It's definitely the kind of level only a few people have.

570. Nameless Crafter

Yep. She must be really famous. The residents who saw her started getting excited, so I asked them about her.

571. Nameless Crafter

Whoa. More deets?

572. Nameless Crafter

They said her name is Sophie Lilywhite Sorciere.

She's a super prodigy witch and the youngest to ever become a sorciere.

573. Nameless Crafter

A witch?! There're witches?!

574. Nameless Crafter

So this game *does* have witches!

575. Nameless Crafter

Is she a good witch? Or a bad witch? If she can walk around town, she must be good, right?

576. Nameless Crafter

Apparently, the majority of potions being sold right now were invented thanks to witches. I don't know if they're good or bad, but you definitely don't wanna pick a fight with them. They say they're higher ranking than the lower tiers of nobles.

577. Nameless Crafter

So witches in this game work on production? That seems like a trap on the part of the devs.

578. Nameless Crafter

That's possible. The word "witch" means a lot of different things depending on who you ask, after all.

579. Nameless Crafter

Yeah, what can you do? Different stories treat witches as totally different things.

580. Nameless Crafter

The developers know that, yet they throw them right at you anyway. It's the same with the outer ones!

581. Nameless Crafter

That's a good point.

582. Nameless Crafter

The resident I asked really wanted me to know this stuff.

They said they go from apprentice witches to witches, then to magisa, and then to sorciere—the unaging witch.

583. Nameless Crafter

Huh? So that kid doesn't age?

584. Nameless Crafter

Does that mean their title gets added to the end of their name? If her name is Sorciere, she must be unaging.

585. Nameless Crafter

I was told that witches are generally like doctors, but once they become magisa, many of them get some combat abilities too. They need them to go retrieve their own ingredients.

586. Nameless Crafter

Ah, I see...

587. Nameless Crafter

They're the origin of the magic potions being sold as “witch's secret medicine.” There're special medicines that only witches can make, so the kingdom looks out for them too.

588. Nameless Crafter

So they're medical professionals? Who would want to lose their pharmacists?

589. Nameless Crafter

The magic potions on the market right now are supposedly the lesser versions that anyone can make, not just witches. The actual witch's secret medicine can't even be

compared to that. They're on a different level than pharmacists.

590. Nameless Crafter

It heals wounds instantly when you drink it or pour it on your body... Magic medicine sure is amazing.

591. Nameless Crafter

It sounds like offending the witches and causing them to leave the country would instantly make it nonfunctioning.

592. Nameless Crafter

Yeah, that makes sense, but doesn't that give witches free rein to do whatever they want?

593. Nameless Crafter

I was told that witches have their own monitoring system amongst themselves. That's why witches can take each other out.

594. Nameless Crafter

Whoa. So witches can be seen as shameful to others?

595. Nameless Crafter

Supposedly the best way to deal with a selfish witch is to go crying about her to a higher-ranking witch. They're nice to the townsfolk, but they ask whatever they want of the kingdom's government...

596. Nameless Crafter

Ah... That seems like it would be a tricky situation.

597. Nameless Crafter

That's all the stuff a magisa told me.

598. Nameless Crafter

Huh?!

599. Nameless Crafter

Her name was Lola Gracian Magisa. She was the same person riding a giant summoned servant in the town square...

600. Nameless Crafter

That lady?!

601. Nameless Crafter

She also told me that when sorcieres misbehave, the outer ones come for them.

602. Nameless Crafter

Really? Those things?

603. Nameless Crafter

She said unaging witches are much more likely to be untouchable, which is why the outer ones have to act...

604. Nameless Crafter

Ah... They're pretty quick to take action...

605. Nameless Crafter

Yeah, they just teleport to them!

606. Nameless Crafter

There aren't actually that many witches, so they all know each other and almost never go down the wrong path.

607. Nameless Crafter

So why was a top witch with the princess...?

608. Nameless Crafter

She was apparently drawn to her Nether items. Ms. Lola told me that witches are likely going to swarm her for those.

609. Nameless Crafter

I see. After all, the princess is probably the supreme authority of that crafting region.

821. Anastasia

Good afternoon. I'm posting a resurrection potion recipe now that I've obtained it. You need either the Compounding or Alchemy skill.

What I've learned is that the item quality affects how much HP you respawn with. I haven't acquired S or S+ quality yet.

I consulted with Ms. Salute to decide on a price. We settled on 600 gold for C-quality potions, with an increase of 50 gold for each higher quality up to B+.

I'm selling A- potions for 1,000 gold and an increase of 200 gold per each grade up. S- is at 1,800 gold with 400 gold for each new quality bump after that.

Compounding recipe: http://*****

Alchemy recipe: http://*****

Completed product B+: http://*****

Completed product A+: http://*****

Completed product S-: http://*****

Screenshot of unlocked quest: http://*****

822. Nameless Crafter

Whooooo! Resurrection potions!

823. Nameless Crafter

You cleared A-tier and got all the way up to S-?!

824. Nameless Crafter

Woo-hoooooo! She shared the resurrection potions! Princess is so generous!

825. Nameless Crafter

I see! So that's why she asked people to die!

826. Anastasia

I spent the day crafting potions and put them all on consignment with a limit of three potions per customer.

It looks like you already received information about witches, so I won't bother repeating it.

827. Nameless Crafter

I've gotta go buy some!

828. Nameless Crafter

It's really cool that she posted it for us and didn't just keep it to herself.

829. Anastasia

Even if I did, it's a resurrection potion, after all... Keeping it to myself wouldn't do any good. I also have the advantage of access to high-quality ingredients to make them, so it's no problem for me to share.

830. Salute

The princess taught me the recipe when she came to me for advice. I've been crafting these potions since this afternoon and still can't reach the S tiers.

831. Anastasia

I had to divert from the original recipe a bit. Can you do that?

832. Salute

I altered it a bit to get to A+, but I can't reach S-tier at all. Maybe there's some other requirement?

833. Anastasia

The biggest differences between us are that I use Alchemy and am a different race...

834. Nameless Crafter

It's a conference of the crafters.

835. Nameless Crafter

C'mon, keep going.

836. Salute

Hmm... Don't you think they'd avoid making quality depend on race? What I really want to know is why the item name changes.

837. Anastasia

Right, it becomes a "bless potion" at S-.

838. Nameless Crafter

Do you give it to someone when they sneeze?

839. Nameless Crafter

Thanks for trying, but I doubt it's that.

840. Anastasia

Ah, speaking of blessings, I received the title of “Stellura’s Blessings.” I bet divine protection is related to resurrection potions.

841. Salute

Seriously? If that’s the general idea, then maybe you need to be clergy, a witch, or have divine protection.

842. Anastasia

If everyone else can only reach A+ quality, I should probably raise the price of my S-tier potions.

I’ll try asking Ms. Sophie about the subject...

843. Salute

The other option is material quality. When I used C-tier, more than half of my potions came out as high as B+. When I used B-tier materials, that’s when they went up to A+. I haven’t done enough trial and error to decide yet, but I’ll have to test that theory out tomorrow.

844. Nameless Crafter

So you made it all the same way, and only the quality changed...?

845. Nameless Crafter

If you use the same ingredients and reach a certain quality more than half the time, that must be how you find out what the upper limit is.

846. Nameless Crafter

I wonder what happens if you craft it with the three ingredients being at C, B, and A quality...

847. Nameless Crafter

Wouldn’t it only go to B+? Like, you think the A will make it easier to get a higher quality, but then it gets erased by the C ingredient and gets stuck in the B-tier.

848. Nameless Crafter

It's possible... Going B, B, A for an A+ limit would make it pretty easy.

849. Nameless Crafter

We'll just have to test it to figure anything else out. Anyway, putting B-tier aside, A-tier's really hard to get to.

850. Nameless Crafter

This. My skill level's not high enough.

851. Anastasia

I just checked with Ms. Sophie. It sounds like Ms. Salute was right. The respective ranks of clergy, witches, and those with divine protection affect the potion quality.

Witches get S-, magisa get S, and sorcieres get S+.

Blessings get S-, divine protection gets S, and divine love gets S+.

Priests get S-, bishops get S, and archbishops and higher get S+.

852. Nameless Crafter

Clergy seems like the easiest route...

853. Salute

Ugh... Should I try to become a witch...?

854. Anastasia

I suppose I should try to receive divine love... Well, just for resurrection potions, at least.

Anyway, I'm going to bed. Goodnight.

855. Salute

Thanks for all your help!

856. Nameless Crafter

G'night.

857. Nameless Crafter

This resurrection potion thing is really tricky!!

858. Nameless Crafter

I feel you. It just starts to change out of nowhere.

859. Salute

The princess said it was pretty difficult with Alchemy too.

860. Nameless Crafter

You mean Alchemy is more than just using Synthesize and bam, you're done?

861. Nameless Crafter

That's kind of what it is at first, but it actually gets harder the more you use it.

862. Nameless Crafter

For real? What do you even do?

863. Nameless Crafter

You basically control your magical energy. That's why Dexterity equipment doesn't help Alchemy at all.

864. Nameless Crafter

So magic is all that matters?

865. Nameless Crafter

I've always thought of Alchemy as a jack-of-all-trades sort of thing, but now that I've started to find the items that can only be made through Alchemy, I think I need to change my point of view.

866. Nameless Crafter

Especially after seeing what the princess sells, right...? I get it.

867. Nameless Crafter

That magic clay is great stuff. I want more of it, but she never sells much. It's probably hard to make. Expensive too...

868. Akirina

Magic clay... Damn crazy alchemists... Urk! My head hurts...

869. Nameless Crafter

Hey, what's wrong with you?

870. Akirina

When Sis made one of those, I took splash damage and almost died... I was watching from a corner of the room, but I lost a ton of HP too.

871. Nameless Crafter

Ah, yes. The crazy alchemists. Now I understand.

872. Nameless Crafter

How can I become a pioneer like Princess?!

873. Nameless Crafter

Say goodbye to your humanity...

874. Nameless Crafter

Is that really the answer?

875. Nameless Crafter

I'm curious about those talismans too. She sold another batch, but I still don't have enough.

876. Nameless Crafter

She's sold more Cooking things, but the Alchemy items remain unchanged.

877. Nameless Crafter

The problem is that it requires more materials than other skills, plus there's the C-tier quality limit...

878. Nameless Crafter

The princess sure is intense...

879. Nameless Crafter

You think someone who chooses to play as a zombie is sane?

880. Nameless Crafter

...I can't deny that!

881. Nameless Crafter

But she's so nice.

882. Nameless Crafter

So is Mohawk, but there're probably a lot of people who can't stand him...

883. Akirina

People who Sis hates are usually hated by everyone else eventually.

884. Nameless Crafter

What the hell? That's scary.

885. Nameless Crafter

So if Princess glares at me, I'll just have to die. She's a real princess.

886. Nameless Crafter

True royalty.

887. Nameless Crafter

So what's the truth?

888. Akirina

She hates people who aren't worth talking to, so there aren't very many people she likes either. I hate them too, of course!

889. Nameless Crafter

I get that. I can't stand them either.

890. Nameless Crafter

That makes sense...

891. Nameless Crafter

It sucks to feel like you wasted your time talking to someone.

892. Nameless Crafter

Who's not worth talking to? I've never met one before...

893. Nameless Crafter

Oh, then be grateful for your friends. Some people out there are unbelievable.

894. Nameless Crafter

It's like, "I want to play catch, but you're treating it like this is dodgeball or a batting cage."

895. Nameless Crafter

It feels terrible to be helpless, stuck in a one-way interaction like that.

896. Nameless Crafter

And it's always times like that when the offender acts all high and mighty. No matter what you say, they won't notice the problem.

897. Nameless Crafter

This. And then *you're* the one who starts to feel uneasy.

898. Nameless Crafter

...Let's stop talking about this. It's not a good subject.

899. Nameless Crafter

Right, no more of that. Let's talk about something fun like production!

900. Dentelle

I've got silk in my sights now, so I'll be able to make silk dresses. I've already had a few requests come in.

901. Nameless Crafter

Whoa, finally! We've got silk!

902. Nameless Crafter

You found silkworms?!

903. Dentelle

In a way, yeah. I'm gathering all the information about that as we speak. I also purchased spider silk from an arachne player.

904. Nameless Crafter

Ah, I see. So spider silk exists too.

905. Nameless Crafter

You can't get that from the spiders to the west of Starting Town.

906. Nameless Crafter

Of course not. They're only around level 10.

CHAPTER 6

END OF SUMMER BREAK: MAINTENANCE DAY

OH, MAINTENANCE hasn't started yet? I think I'll get a little gaming time in. I have some crafting I can do.

"Hum-dee-dum... Oh? What's this icon...? Signal loss?"

Connection is unstable.

"It's so bad that it shows up in the log, not just as an icon? What's going on?"

Connection to the server has been lost. Now returning to title screen.

"It crashed...?"

I turn off the game and check my LAN cable. It's still plugged in... Oh? Could it be the router...? Ah, it says it's not connected. I suppose I have no choice but to get out of bed.

"Morning!"

"Good morning, Dad. Are you getting any internet?"

"Nope. It's dead."

Dad and I go over to check the router in the corner of the room. Most of the lights are

on...except the one that really should be.

"Guess I'll restart it, then." Dad hits the reset button, which causes all the lights to go off. A few minutes pass, but they remain just as dark.

"It's not coming back," I conclude.

"Huh? It's not restarting?"

I catch the faint smell of something burning. Smoke quietly starts to rise up to the ceiling.

"Whoa!" yells Dad.

He yanks the plug out. We need water—no, a fire extinguisher! Actually, I can probably just douse the router with a bowl full of water. I can't believe it caught on fire!

Fortunately, there were no flames when I picked it up. Dad and I gaze at the deceased router.

"You're not gonna be able to game until tonight," Dad tells me.

"The game is going down for maintenance today anyway, so that part isn't a problem."

"Weird... I know I was going to replace this router, since it was pretty old and couldn't keep up with everything we got with our internet contract... I just don't remember ever buying a new one."

"You seem a bit young for memory loss," I retort.

"Ha ha ha! I'll go buy the latest model."

Despite all the commotion this morning, I'm glad the worst of it was a bit of smoke.

I have nothing else to do while the router is dead. My only option is to get ready for school along with my sister.

"You're not forgetting anything, are you?" asks Mom.

"I don't have anything to forget!"

“Is that right? Be safe on your way to school.”

“See you later.”

“Bye!” says Rina.

My sister and I head to school as our mom waves goodbye. All I need to do today is attend the opening ceremony. That doesn’t require me to bring anything.

“We’ve lost both paradise and our router...” groans Rina.

“Our next paradise will be winter break, I think.”

We arrive at school for the first time in a month. I separate from Rina and head to my classroom.

“Ah, morning!”

“Good morning, Ms. Ichinomiya.”

This is the class president, who plays as Lapis in the game.

When I look around the room, it seems like almost everyone is discussing FLFO.

“I ended up buying steel weapons,” Ms. Ichinomiya tells me.

“You did? Those will last past level 20, so you’ll have to get armor to go with them next.”

“Should I get cloth or leather armor?”

“Most close-range attackers go with leather. They all have their own unique traits, though...”

Cloth items have higher resistance to magic but none against physical attacks. They also don’t make any sound when you move about. Pure magic and rear-guard players typically go with cloth armor.

Leather is more balanced and has a higher defense against physical attacks. Unlike metal armor, it has some magic defense, but not very much. Leather armor also makes

a bit of noise when the wearer moves. If you're unsure what to pick, leather is the safe option.

Metal armor has high defense against physical attacks but nothing against magic. It's also very noisy when moving. Most tanks go with metal armor.

"What kind of armor is your dress, Ms. Kotone?"

"Light armor. It's made of unique materials, providing defense against both physical and magic attacks, but it also weighs less than heavy armor."

"Is that right?" Ms. Ichinomiya replies.

"I hear some dresses are made with metal and are quite heavy. The noise it makes is about as loud as other light armor garments. I'm able to move as fast as I do not only because of my unique race traits, but also because of my lightweight equipment."

Even a player's mount could probably kill me if I wasn't undead. I ended up putting my money on the right horse.

"Then I should buy leather armor, not cloth armor, if I'm gonna be fighting on the front lines?" she asks me.

"That's right. Although, cloth armor would be fine if you intend to evade all attacks..."

"Nope, can't do that. Maybe I should upgrade my leather armor now while I can."

Bug type enemies have their own reinforcements that serve in place of metal armor, from what I've heard, so you could potentially take it off them.

The one problem with that, however, is that organic armor is itself a weak point. You might be able to cover for such a weak point with a bit of effort, but I doubt the game would allow for such an easy fix. Basically, you should just focus on reinforcing your current resistances.

Well, I generally absorb all enemies either way instead of messing around with their drops. I have no intention of changing my armor now.

The classroom fills while I chat with the class president. Tomohiro and Suguru approach us too.

“Hey there!”

“Yo!”

“Good morning,” the class president and I reply in unison.

“We get to go home early today, but we can’t even play because of the maintenance,” Tomohiro complains.

“At least we can watch the livestream,” Suguru adds.

Mr. Yamamoto did say he was going to stream today. Well, my router is still fried at home, so I’ll have to watch on my connect board.

“I was crafting this morning until my router went up in smoke.”

“For real? I guess you could call that perfect timing.”

“I guess so...”

“Did everything turn out okay?”

“Yes. I’m just glad the sprinklers didn’t go off.” I would be horrified if the sprinklers flooded my house.

“Even if it burst into flames, you could just grab it by the cord and throw it in your pool.”

“We have a small fire extinguisher, so we would probably use that first.”

“That would still make a mess of your room... Now that I think of it, we haven’t been over to swim yet this year.”

“That’s because we’re all so busy gaming.”

They used to come over and swim at our pool every year. Nowadays, if we just want an excuse to have fun, we can go to the southern area in FLFO. We also had the camping event this year.

I usually use the pool for exercise and training, but that isn’t the same as using it for

fun.

“All right, sit down, everyone!”

The bell rings and our teacher arrives, so we rush to our seats.

“Oh, look at that. You’re all here. You can go home today after the opening ceremony, but since it’s a pain to herd you all through the school, we’re doing it in the classroom instead! We’ve finally got this installed in our building too.”

The teacher gestures behind him to what looks like a normal interactive whiteboard to me. Did it get a new function?

“As you can see, it looks exactly the same on the outside, but there’s a new function that the teachers will really love. In other words, my job got easier! Isn’t that great? Anyway, if you’ve gotta use the bathroom, go now, and don’t make a fuss about it.”

He ends the announcement there, and we have a bit of free time.

Once it’s time to take our seats again, the screen displays an image of our principal and school staff in the broadcasting room. I like how much easier it is to just stay in our seats. Then again, more people might fall asleep this way. Well, at least now there’s no need to gather up all the students in one space.

We listen to the principal talk for a while until the broadcast is finished.

“Yep, nice and easy. I don’t really have anything else to say to you second-years. The first-years are probably getting an explanation about what happens after summer break, but you don’t need that, do you?”

“It’s just the school festival and tests, right?”

“Yep.”

“Yeah, don’t bother,” the students answered.

“Then entertain yourselves until it’s time to leave. The other classes might be getting explanations, so don’t be too loud.”

“Kay!”

I wonder what we'll be doing this year for the school festival?

"Oh, did the FLFO stream start? Let's watch. Here we go..." Our teacher puts Mr. Yamamoto up on the blackboard screen, though he's appearing in a strange aspect ratio.

"Wait, did I do something wrong?" our teacher wonders.

"Howdy, everyone! It's me, the boss dude! Wait, that ratio's not right... Hmm? Ah, found the problem." The video corrects itself. *"There we go."*

"Ah, so it was on his end..."

Our classmates who have been playing FLFO come and gather at the front. This includes Tomohiro and Suguru, of course, as well as the class president. I think I'll join them.

"Whoa... There're a lot of people rushing around behind him."

"Yeah, I heard they're changing servers this time."

"I'll go ahead and explain today's long maintenance period again. As you can see behind me, we need to adjust both the servers and development environment. To be honest, we hope it only takes us a single day."

"Whooooo! Holy craaaap! It's the real deal!"

"Huh...? Why're you runnin' all over the place? There's a paper with the specs on it attached to the box!"

"Look at this! Mr. Yamamoto, it's a three-way GPU, and each unit has over 300,000 cores!"

"For real?"

"Heh heh heh heh... We never have to worry about freezes again!"

They sure are excited. So am I, now that I've heard about the three-way GPU. I understand how they feel.

"A three-way GPU with over 300,000?" asks the class president.

"It means there are three graphics cards, each with over 300,000 cores, that are linked together. In other words, that GPU alone has over 900,000..." explains Tomohiro.

"The GPU is the graphics card?"

"They're also called graphics cards or video cards. What's the acronym stand for again, Kotone?"

"GPU stands for graphics processing unit. It's a part that specializes in image processing."

"Um, and it's different from a CPU, right?"

"The central processing unit is the CPU. The CPU is the main processor. GPUs are separate, as they take on the work of processing images and such," I explain.

The CPU processes information in the same way that a person would carefully draw a picture one line at a time. The GPU, on the other hand, is like a stamp. The CPU can process a single unit quickly, but only that one unit at a time. The GPU can process multiple units all at once, making it much faster for things like images that require lots of processing.

"To put it more simply, the CPU is like the brain, and the GPU is the body. The brain processes the five senses and sends orders to the body to make it move."

"I think I understand," Ms. Ichinomiya says.

The GPU doesn't specialize in prioritizing one order over another for complicated actions. That's what the CPU is for. The GPU's job is to process bundles of operations as instructed.

"To sum it up, they're all excited because they have three really high-spec GPUs all in one," I tell her.

We kill time by watching the livestream until it's finally time to go home.

"All right, you guys can head out now."

"Let's watch the rest of the stream here."

“No, do that when you get home!”

Our teacher’s efforts are in vain. A few people end up staying to watch the stream—including our group, of course.

“You guys are staying too?” our teacher asks.

“My router broke while I was trying to log in this morning. It’s more convenient here.”

“Well, be glad it happened during maintenance.”

“Sis, are you going home?”

“I’m going to watch the stream here.”

“Okay, got it!”

My sister joins us, bringing Ms. Aina and Ms. Karen along with her. The BBS is down too, which means there’s nothing better for any of us to do than watch the stream.

“Ms. Tsukishiro, Ms. Ichinomiya, you guys play the game too?” asks a boy in the class.

“I actually play it quite a bit,” I respond.

“I just bought steel weapons,” says Ms. Ichinomiya.

“For real?”

My male classmates, who I assume also play FLFO, seem surprised.

People tell me that I don’t seem like the type to play video games, but I actually play them quite a bit thanks to my sister’s obsession. Our family also plays party games during the end-of-year holidays. Gaming can really give your brain a workout. While it’s possible to play without much thought, just like with all things, you won’t improve unless you use your brain.

“I ran into her in the game,” our teacher reveals.

“You surpassed us?!” cry the boys.

“No, I was just hanging out by the statue in Starting Town.”

“Indeed, we did meet once,” I remark.

There’s always a non-zero chance of meeting someone you know IRL when you play the same game as them. There were lots of other people I knew playing, so it was possible I’d passed by them without even noticing.

“Oh yeah. Sell me a few of those bless potions, Sis,” Rina demands.

“S-tier?”

“Yeah. I just want one per person.”

“Ah, I want some too,” adds Tomohiro.

It sounds like other players tested out my resurrection potions after I posted about them.

You can’t use them on yourself, obviously, since you’re dead. You have to have someone else pour them over you. Throwing them is useless for those who don’t have Potion Pitch as part of Projectile.

You respawn at the time of your choice, although it does have a time limit that will force you to respawn either way once reached. Enemies can hit you again as soon as you choose to come back, so you have to be sure to time it properly. There’s no invulnerability window at all. Shockingly enough, undead can use them too. I suppose the description didn’t say we *couldn’t*.

Ms. Sophie explained that the potion stopped outsiders from being forcibly transported to the Nether, which is why a player’s race doesn’t affect the outcome. That’s probably why it doesn’t come with a death penalty either—or maybe the game just doesn’t want players to think of it as a death.

Well, the potions are on a ten-minute cooldown, so I suppose you won’t last if you keep getting knocked down. Ten minutes can be a matter of life or death in an MMO.

You can’t move until you choose to respawn, nor do you receive EXP while dead. The same goes for skill level increases, naturally, as you won’t exactly be able to fight.

Generally, these potions feel like the type of thing that helps you choose when you're ready to die. It's better to have one than not, but that's about it. Being allowed one death is a quality-of-life improvement, and it's an especially nice to have for things like boss fights. You can AFK for ten minutes and then the fight is over. Whether that fight ends in victory or total defeat, however, depends on the players who are left alive. In fact, if they win without you, you're going to feel like a really unnecessary part of the party. How awkward it must be for the one who died.

"How's it feel to get beaten to death?"

"Feels great!"

"Let's kill him."

The top players are, of course, going to seek S-tier potions that revive 100 percent HP. This is to prevent accidental deaths after reviving, as well as eliminate a need for post-revival healing.

Rina and Tomohiro ask for ten potions each. The S-tier potions are just about twice the price of others, so this is a great deal for me.

"All right, now that it's getting late and we have more people watching, let's get down to information about the update," Mr. Yamamoto says.

"Oh, here we go."

"The biggest change is the removal of the player cap. Congratulations. Let's all welcome the newbies. We're always shipping out the latest model of VR equipment, but some functions are limited, though it's possible to use the older models too. Of course, you can also play on the old model and transfer to a new one when you buy it."

"I'd like it if first- and second-wavers could spend time in other towns for a while. I'm not worried about the hunting grounds, since there're instances there. The biggest problem is the size of the towns. We're watching to see if we should make the towns bigger or split the channels."

"Next up, base race stats are now going to be displayed. There're nine tiers, from SSS to S, then A to F, but even the same ranking has different scopes, so you should just use this as a rough estimate. The categories are HP, MP, Strength, Dexterity, Stamina, Agility, Intelligence, Spirit, resistance, unique, and body type. Humans are the standard measure"

for everyone. Their resistance and unique rankings are F, and their body type is small. Everything else is D.

"We're also changing the rules for respeccing. It's no longer an allocation of points. You can only change to skills of the same genre, which means you can't trade production skills for combat skills. Unneeded skills will be converted to skill points. To summarize, whenever you respec now, you can no longer pour levels into skills that are hard to increase."

"I see. Of course they'd limit that. Then again, you can't really do a full respec in the first place."

"Did you do one, Sis?"

"I did in the very beginning so that I could focus on Appraisal. But I haven't had a chance to respec since then."

"I see. Yeah, Appraisal never levels up..."

"What else...? We're finally adding an avatar tab on your equipment. You can adjust just their appearance and animations, and the stats won't change. Weapon types can be made to match that."

"Oh, finally!"

"I bet we're gonna see people using joke weapons as fashion now."

So you can wear your best equipment while also dressing your best? That sort of thing is common in MMOs. In fact, without this system, people all start to have the same outer appearance, which isn't very fun to look at.

There's probably demand for this, as the game starts you out by allowing you to create your appearance. I suppose you can also use it to hide rare equipment.

"All right, it's over now. Go home!" our teacher instructs us.

He kicks us out after we finish hearing about bug fixes, so it does seem like a good time to go home. I'm also getting hungry. I eat my lunch and decide to kill some time by swimming in our pool.

That evening, Mom and Dad come home and set up the new router. Today felt like the first day in a while that I didn't play any video games. I pretty much spent my whole summer break in FLFO.

CHAPTER 7

POST-MAINTENANCE

“TIME TO GAME!”

The next day, I watch my sister charge up to her bedroom after we return from school. Then I change clothes and log in.

I leveled up a lot of my skills at the end of summer break. Most of them are looking nice, except I can't get Unparalleled Style: Blade to go up at all...

Space Recognition Expansion isn't leveling up either, but at least it's a passive skill.

I learned the art Taftóchrono at level 30 of Rapier. It deals nine follow-up attacks after a stab attack, which is quite the increase in firepower from Regenerate and its six consecutive attacks. It has a longer cooldown time, so I'm not sure if I should consider it a strict upgrade. Well, I don't find myself using many close-range arts, so I probably don't need to worry so much.

I also learned Magic Barrier at level 25 of Magic Catalyst. This allows me to create a shield that blocks magic attacks, but that's not something I need in the first place. More importantly, it will become a second-tier skill soon.

Superior Magic Assist has strengthened the spells I use in my daily routine, just like it always does, so I won't bother thinking about that one too much.

When Shadow Magic reached level 10, I learned the art Shadow Dive. It allows you to lurk in the shadows, but you'll still be hit by AoE attacks if you're within their radius. You also take more Light damage while diving in the shadows, so you have to watch out for attacks like Light Burst.

There was something a bit interesting that came from Secret Art of Necromancy. Necromancer, an art that you get at level 40, allows you to control the corpses of enemies right away. They don't count as party members, and they stop moving after a certain amount of time. Of course, their drops disappear when you use this art. In other words, they're like disposable meat shields. However, just because it's

interesting doesn't mean I'll use it. It's not like they increase my capacity.

All of these skills were the result of my hard work over summer break.

Now, as for what I can check right away with maintenance being over... I'll probably drown in a sea of people if I go to Starting Town. I have no interest in such an experience. I won't use the avatar tab on my equipment right now either, but I should definitely check my race rating.

AVERSA PRINCESS

HP: A

MP: A

Strength: E

Dexterity: C

Stamina: B

Agility: F/F

Intelligence: B

Spirit: C

Resistance: A

Unique: A

Body Type: Sml

I see... They said that humans are D-level, right? But why do I have two agility grades?

Ah, they added a section to the help menu.

***ABOUT RACE RATINGS**

Ratings are given in nine grades. From top to bottom, they are: SSS, SS, S, A, B, C, D, E, F.

However, the same rating doesn't guarantee the same numerical value.

The categories are as follows:

HP: You become unable to move when your HP reaches 0.

MP: Without enough MP, you become unable to use unique actions such as arts and spells.

Strength: Also known as STR. This stat mostly affects your physical attack power.

Dexterity: Also known as DEX. This stat affects the level of completion for production items, archery accuracy, and more.

Stamina: Also known as STA. This stat mainly affects maximum HP and physical defense.

Agility: Also known as AGL. This stat mainly affects player speed. Displayed as ground speed/midair speed.

Intelligence: Also known as INT. This stat mainly affects magic attacks.

Spirit: Also known as SPR. This stat mainly affects maximum MP and magic defense.

Resistance: A cumulative score of things like status ailment resistance.

Unique: This criteria generally applies to inhuman races. The higher the score, the more unique your character could probably be considered.

Body type: This refers to body size. Human size is listed as "Sml" for small.

Mini: Min, Small: Sml, Medium: Med, Large: Lge, Maximum: Max.

As the basis for these rankings, humans have a resistance and unique ranking of F, while their size is Sml. The rest of their stats are graded D.

From a physical perspective, one might call humans weak. But humans have survived thanks to their

weapons, technology, and battle tactics. Show the world just what makes humans so special.

After all this time, we finally have stat descriptions? These are really just the bare minimum, though. HP, Stamina, MP, and Spirit are graded differently. I'm sure the devs can't just reveal everything in the help menu... We'd be fools to expect compassion.

But now I see that my Agility has grades for both ground and midair speed. They're both as low as they can possibly be. Most people generally have *some* Agility, be it one or the other.

As an inhuman race, I feel like I can safely say that I'm much more powerful than humans.

There's just one problem. Well, maybe it's more accurate to call it something that sticks out to me.

I have limitations placed on me as an Aversa Princess since my base level is too low, but wouldn't this race usually be close to a final evolution? Yet some of the categories that could be called base stats aren't even up to an A grade. The game also won't tell me what my limitations are, so it's hard to imagine that it's displaying my restrictions here. Maybe they'll reach A-grade when I evolve from a princess to a queen? Or maybe S and above is reserved for beings like the outer ones...?

Oh well. Stats are really just things that help you choose which evolution to pick. They also tell you which of your weaknesses have improved. My C grades for Dexterity and Spirit could be considered upgrades, but I've practically abandoned Strength and Agility at this point.

Now that my equipment has reached the "guardianship" title, switching them out

really isn't an option. The rest of my upgrades have come from my accessories and skills. Equipment slots and skill points are limited, so it would be a waste to try to upgrade the ones that are subpar. It feels more worthwhile to make the most of my strong points.

Accessories, housing, money... Ugh. My head hurts. I *would* like to start filling my empty accessory slots, and the idea of a kitchen sounds very appealing, but as an attacker, I should prioritize equipment that will boost my firepower.

I speak with the gardener who tends the fields by my ore vein. He's planted magic grass that restores MP, as well as saplings for black tea in my fields—both things I exchanged my event points to obtain.

I remove the weeds and mix up pure dirt to form fertilizer. Then I mix it again, this time with mulch, to produce high-quality fertilizer. I hand it over to my gardener and leave the rest to him. There's already water of reminiscence to water the plants with.

I can now harvest high-quality moon flower grass, an ingredient in standard MP potions. I can also harvest high-quality moon-viewing grass, which is used in higher-tier MP potions.

[MATERIAL] MOON FLOWER GRASS

Rarity: NO Quality: A

A magic plant containing lots of magical energy. Plenty will grow under the right conditions.

[MATERIAL] MOON-VIEWING GRASS

Rarity: NO Quality: A

A magic plant containing lots of magical energy. The flowers bloom as the moon emerges, causing the plant to stock up on the moon's energy.

This is a great improvement. I probably won't use them myself, though...

The saplings haven't grown yet, naturally. I hope they become large trees soon.

Akirina has arrived for a visit.

Tomo has arrived for a visit.

Hm? Ah, right. They wanted bless potions.

"Sis! Resurrection potions!" Rina greets me.

"Yo. Sell me potions," Tomo adds.

"That'll be 2,800 per potion," I inform them.

"Got it!"

"Kay."

We make the exchange, then I watch the two of them head straight out to go hunting. I consider going to Starting Town before remembering that wouldn't be a good idea. Instead, Fellforge in the north sounds like a good destination. I'll head to the trader's union there.

I collect the profits from my sales and deposit the money with them. Jerky really does seem like it has the best ingredient-to-profit ratio. As a player, I do want to mass-produce resurrection potions to put on the market, but considering the Nether donations I get, I'm perfectly happy with as many player deaths as possible.

Either way, there're about to be many more deaths. The player limit was removed. Hmm...third-wavers, right? More people means more consumables used. Now is the time to make money. I think I'll focus solely on making jerky instead of other meat products. Considering the arts you get early on, I'm sure new chefs won't be able to make jerky for some time yet.

As for Alchemy, I don't really feel like making anything with it for third-wavers. It would be a waste to use my A-quality moon flower grass, so I'd prefer to sell them to Ms. Salute instead of using them myself.

All right. I don't have anything else to work on right now, so after dinner, I'll craft until it's time to go to bed.

I may as well do some mining while I'm here in Fellforge. Now that summer break is over, I need to hunt when I get home and do a bit of crafting before I go to bed. That sounds like a good plan.

Time to get to work!

OFFICIAL BBS 5

[So many races] Comprehensive Inhuman Thread 53 [All of them inhuman]

1. Inhuman Adventurer

This is a thread for anything relating to inhuman races.

You can post general comments about inhuman races, but the links below will be helpful to choose from!

Past threads: http://*****

Comprehensive humanity: http://*****

Comprehensive inhuman: http://*****

Humans: http://*****

Beastfolk: http://*****

...

Fairies/Fae: http://*****

Demi-humans: http://*****

Slimes: http://*****

...etc.

>>940 Next thread's in your hands!

654. Inhuman Adventurer

Inhuman players really get stuck with unbalanced base stats.

655. Inhuman Adventurer

Humans and humanity are all D-grade, right? It's like there was a calculation error for all the other races.

656. Inhuman Adventurer

Well, it wouldn't make sense for them to change humans too much.

657. Inhuman Adventurer

Maybe the highest of the D-grades are living machinery and humans just barely make the cut.

658. Inhuman Adventurer

I guess that's possible.

659. Human Adventurer

By the way, has progress been made on the investigation of which skills cancel out others?

660. Inhuman Adventurer

Like Physical Immunity and stuff? Nope, no progress. There's just not enough information.

661. Inhuman Adventurer

The upper limits and existences of second-tier skills are still a mystery too...

662. Human Adventurer

I see...

663. Human Adventurer

About that... I asked a veteran adventurer, and he told me all about it.

664. Human Adventurer

For real? Deets?

665. Inhuman Adventurer

Did he really? What did he say?

666. Human Adventurer

The upgraded version of Physical Immunity is Superior Physical Immunity. As for what it actually does...

Physical Immunity neutralizes first-tier skills.

Superior Physical Immunity neutralizes second-tier skills.

By the way, the guy told me that Magic Immunity and Superior Magic Immunity exist too. For these two...

Magic Immunity neutralizes first-tier spells that don't say "II."

Superior Magic Immunity neutralizes second-tier spells that don't say "III."

If you've got one of the superior immunities, then you're gonna be dealing with veterans at that point.

667. Inhuman Adventurer

Wait, what skill level is that?

668. Inhuman Adventurer

Ah, I see... Makes sense.

So if Physical Immunity is at skill level 20, you can neutralize the level 5 and 10 arts from Sword, which are Slash and Distance Sword.

669. Human Adventurer

Exactly. To put it differently, it doesn't even matter if they have the second-tier skill One-Handed Sword.

However, when One-Handed Sword is around level 35 or so, you have to learn Slash II or else Slash will be neutralized, since it's treated like a normal attack.

670. Inhuman Adventurer

If your opponent has Superior Physical Immunity then it must be at least skill level 1, but is it GG if you have a first-tier skill?

671. Human Adventurer

Yep. But anyone with Superior Physical Immunity is going to be a high-level foe in the first place. I heard they usually get it at level 60 or above. We wouldn't normally run into anyone who has it.

672. Inhuman Adventurer

In other words...

Physical Immunity:

If an enemy's first-tier skill attack is equal to half or less of our skill level, we neutralize the physical damage.

Do I have that right?

673. Human Adventurer

I think that about sums it up. Superior Physical Immunity is for second-tier skills up to your skill level.

674. Inhuman Adventurer

There are third-tier skills too, right? Any immunities for them?

675. Human Adventurer

I heard there's high-level viscous evolutions that don't take any physical damage in the first place.

It's like Complete Physical Immunity or something.

676. Inhuman Adventurer

Those exist? Viscous types are slimes, right? Well, sure... They're weak against magic, after all.

677. Inhuman Adventurer

It's not particularly common to play as a slime, is it?

678. Inhuman Adventurer

I heard some people chose to play as zombies because of the princess, but then it's just one setback after another for them.

679. Inhuman Adventurer

Couldn't they have just looked at the base zombie stats and figured that out in the first place?

680. Inhuman Adventurer

That's just hilarious.

681. Human Adventurer

Human

Strength: D Dexterity: D Stamina: D Agility: D/F Intelligence: D Spirit: D

Zombie

Strength: C Dexterity: E Stamina: B Agility: F/F Intelligence: F Spirit: F

682. Human Adventurer

Lmao.

683. Human Adventurer

Slimes are like that too...

684. Inhuman Adventurer

You'd think you would get stronger after starting out with rock-bottom stats, but it's such torture to even work with those base stats.

685. Inhuman Adventurer

Wolves have got it good.

686. Human Adventurer

Yeah, wolves are powerful, even if they've got low dexterity.

Strength: D Dexterity: F Stamina: D Agility: B/F Intelligence: D Spirit: E

687. Human Adventurer

Well, they've got paws, so it makes sense that their dexterity sucks.

688. Human Adventurer

How does strength affect wolves?

689. Inhuman Adventurer

Their bite power. It helps their legs too, like for jumping.

690. Human Adventurer

I see.

691. Human Adventurer

Going off base stats, are angels and demons strong?

692. Inhuman Adventurer

Absolutely. It makes sense since they're some of the most popular races.

Angel

Strength: D Dexterity: D Stamina: B Agility: D/D Intelligence: D Spirit: A

Demon

Strength: B Dexterity: D Stamina: D Agility: D/D Intelligence: A Spirit: D

693. Inhuman Adventurer

Well, if you just pick an inhuman race because that's what you like, you're gonna find that some races are lacking.

694. Fairellen

Here're the stats for eclesiths!

Strength: F Dexterity: D Stamina: F Agility: E/A Intelligence: A Spirit: B

695. Inhuman Adventurer

Whoa. You're a thunder fairy, right, Ms. Fairellen? Isn't your build specialized just for air battles?

696. Human Adventurer

She's a sky battle sorcerer. I get it.

697. Fairellen

I need to go cool down.

698. Human Adventurer

Eek...

699. Inhuman Adventurer

Please praise me.

Cavaliersith

Strength: B Dexterity: D Stamina: C Agility: E/D Intelligence: D Spirit: C

700. Fairellen

Whoa! What's that?!

701. Inhuman Adventurer

Ah! A new race?! Commencing praise!

702. Inhuman Adventurer

Does “-sith” mean it’s a fairy? But it seems to lean toward physical stuff...

703. Human Adventurer

Cavalier? Does that mean it’s a tank?

704. Inhuman Adventurer

Yep! I turned into some sort of fairy knight!

705. Fairellen

For real? Well, its stats are built for magic, so I’m sure it can use it.

706. Inhuman Adventurer

What, it’s a heavy armor fairy?

707. Inhuman Adventurer

Heavy armor scrubbing brush fairy!

708. Human Adventurer

It's the real deal.

CHAPTER 8

SATURDAY: SEPTEMBER WEEK 1

I WAKE UP AND BEGIN THE DAY by crafting jerky and resurrection potions. Once it's time to log out, I begin my morning routine. I wash my face, brush my teeth, and comb my hair. Then I eat breakfast, change, and go to school... At least, that *would* be my normal routine. Today is Saturday, so I log right into the game once I finish breakfast.

Hmm... Shall I upgrade the old shed for Nether donations? I refurbish the shed, then upgrade it once more to create a torii gate and an offering box. Now it will look like a shrine.

With a click, I submit the changes.

"Princess, does this change anything?"

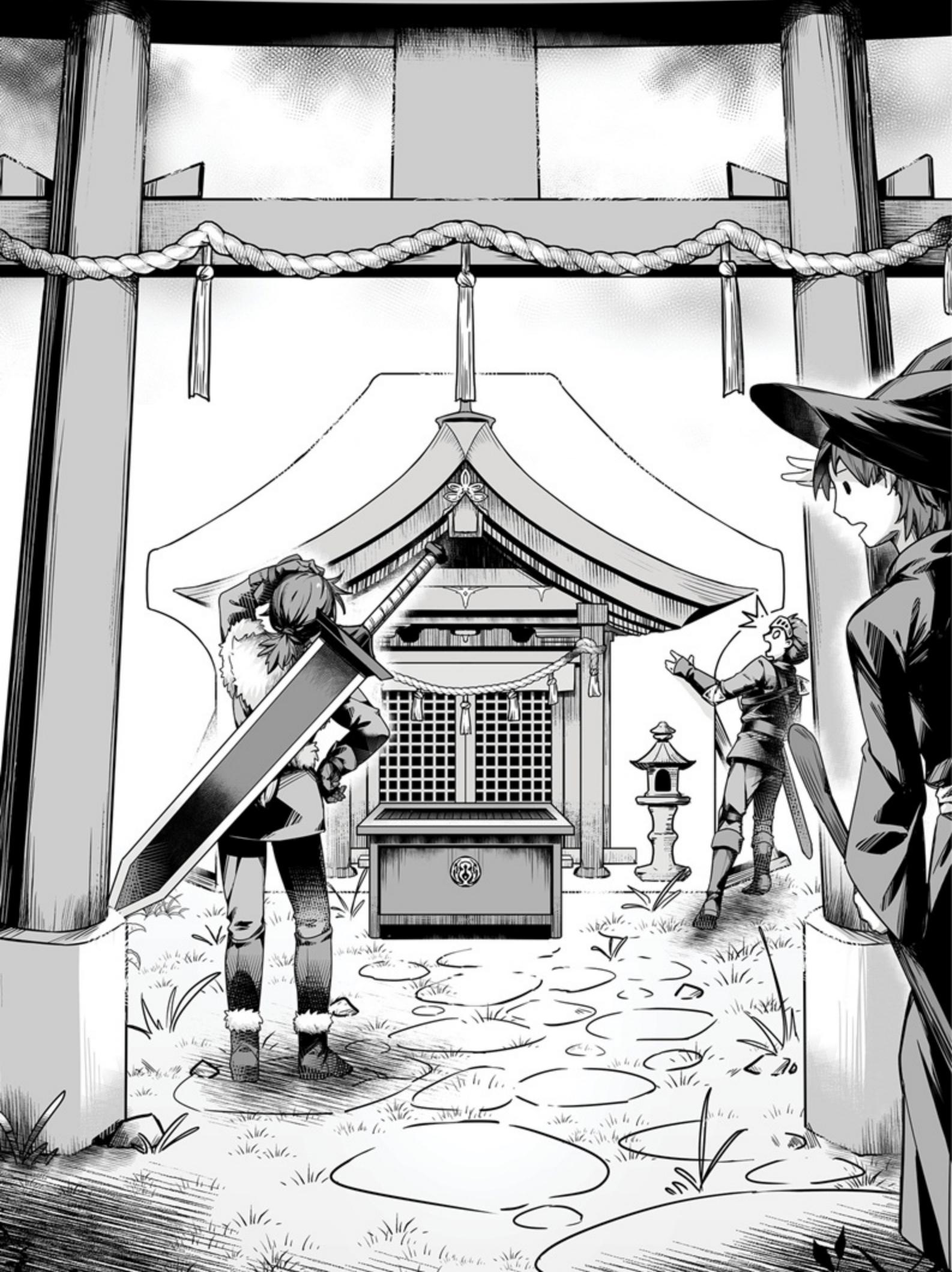
"Change anything? No, not at all. It's simply there for appearances."

"Look at this! Your donations have made it all fancy!"

"That's so unfair, dev team!"

Yes, please send your complaints to developers. It's rather cruel of them. Ha ha ha ha.

"Ah... This shrine is papier-mâché! It's a set for a play..."



“Whoa... The building is paper-thin!”

“The developers are so cheap!”

“Two improvements and it still comes out like this? Shall I upgrade Enma’s Courtroom too...? Let’s go with this one.”

“See ya.”

I made sure outsiders would be even more frustrated when they arrive here after death, so I’ll improve the residents’ environment next. The players who happen to be here see me off as I head to Enma’s place, which could probably be considered resident-exclusive.

I have the residents work as normal while I change Enma’s Courtroom I to Enma’s Courtroom II. Ripples of light expand, making the area more beautiful wherever they touch. This game can be most impressive.

“Wow... We appreciate it, madam.”

I take a look around. “Everything else looks to be in order. Anyway, please make good use of it.”

The people of Enma’s Courtroom bid me farewell as I return to my villa.

Now what should I do with the rest of my day?

Magic Catalyst is at level 30 now, and with it came Assemble Spell. It’s a passive art that increases the strength of spells the more they’re used, so long as the element is the same.

I use six skill points to upgrade Book and gain the art Livre Mastery. This is a passive ability which reduces the amount of MP my spells use and increases my range of attack.

Space Magic has been steadily climbing and is now at level 35. I learned Gravitas Sphere at that point. It’s an art which creates a gravitational sphere at a location of my choosing and absorbs everything within its radius. It’s definitely an exceptional spell to have if you want to hunt with AoE abilities.

I acquired Hide when Shadow Magic reached level 15. This one caters to players wanting to roleplay as evildoers. The murder mantises in the Fellforge mines use Hide too. To put it simply, it's sort of like an optical camouflage spell. By the way, Space Recognition Expansion doesn't involve looking at things with your eyes, which makes it unrelated to Hide. You'll get spotted if someone uses Detect, though, so you can't over-rely on it.

Shadow Magic hit level 35 and upgraded my arts to Dark Ball II and Dark Heal II. There were no new spells otherwise.

Finally, I unlocked Multi-Lock through Superior Magic Assist. This allows you to set multiple targets when using Dual Spell or the like. In other words, you use your spells the same way, but now you're able to target multiple enemies or even heal party members.

I guess I would say my skills are making good progress. I just can't say the same for my capacity. I'm currently at 9,141 and would like a lot more. Perhaps I should stop mining so much and head to the east. That's where I'll be able to find the largest enemies right now.

Ah, I see. I should head to Mr. Ertz's shop first. It's about time I buy a new dismantling knife and kitchen knives. I feel like I can hear my athame crying creepily whenever I cut meat.

Now it's time to warp to Starting Town.

It's my first time visiting the town square since the third-wavers arrived. It's quite crowded, and I see lots of people dressed in beginner's equipment.

"Ah, Princess!" two people say in perfect synchronization. Of course they're none other than Mr. Ame and Ms. Trine. It's been a while since I heard from them.

"Long time no see. Is the game going smoothly for you?"

"Yeah!" they reply in unison.

They tell me that they've been busy leveling up so they can get to the Nether, and they're just about ready to give it their first try.

As flying beings, I don't think it will be difficult for them to get there, but the BBS notes

that different races go through slightly different trials, so it might be significantly more difficult than mine was. Mr. Alf said he had to go through different consecutive battles with different types of opponents, while Mr. Skelly was challenged with both puzzles and combat. Your chosen skills probably alter the trial as well.

I bid them farewell when they leave to go hunting, then head to Mr. Ertz's shop.

"If it isn't Princess? What's up?" he greets me.

"Good morning. I was hoping to buy a new dismantling knife and a kitchen knife."

"Hard at work, aren't ya? You wanting halchium?"

"That's the plan. Also, can you process my magi iron?"

"Of course I can. It's a big help for grinding levels."

I give Mr. Ertz twelve pieces of halchium and put in the order for a dismantling knife and kitchen knife. Then I hand over 180 pieces of magi iron for him to process. I should have sixty ingots by the time he's done.

He needs fewer ore pieces to create an ingot in comparison to my own method of processing with Alchemy. It's better for me to ask Mr. Ertz to do it for me.

"I've got dismantling knives in stock already, but I'll have to make the kitchen knife," he tells me.

"How much will it cost?" I ask.

"Processing the magi iron helps me out, and you brought your own materials too. The knives aren't too expensive in the first place either. How about 20,000 for both of them?"

"What a deal. I'll go withdraw the money while you're working on them."

"Hang on, hang on. You can use your union card for transactions now, don't you know?"

"Ah, that's right. They mentioned that in the update information. Then that's what I'll use."

"Great, thanks. Here's a dismantling knife. Do you mind if I get you your kitchen knife and ingots later?"

"No, that's fine. I don't need the old one, so please dispose of it for me."

"Got it."

I pay Mr. Ertz with my union card. I don't need my old knives anymore, so I sell them to him.

[TOOL] HALCHIUM DISMANTLING KNIFE

Rarity: RA Quality: A- Durability: 150

A halchium knife used for dismantling.

Drop amount increase: Small

Drop quality increase: Small

The durability has increased, and I've gained a drop quality buff too.

Although, the only problem is that I absorb enemies, so I barely have any chances to use it. My Dismantle and Discern skills never make any progress at all.

Regardless, I leave the rest of the work to Mr. Ertz and exit his store.

Now what should I do with my time...?

I'd like to put some work into Alchemy. I'm really seeing the weakness of having a technical build in this game. I don't have enough time to accomplish all the things I can and want to do. I still want to find the gate in the Nether that the Pup Lord mentioned, and I also want to spend some real time in the library at the Evernight Castle. Then there's Anti-Human Style, which I need to learn from Lana. Mythical Languages takes a lot of time too. I could also do some crafting for Cooking or Alchemy. As always in an RPG, there's the option to just grind EXP too.

The best schedule is probably leaving a bit of language study for weekdays after I get home from school, then doing my crafting before I go to bed. On days off from school, like today, I'll look for the gate and spend time in the library. I'll also tell Lana that I'm free before lunch.

Now that that's decided, it's time to get a move on. I've got places to be.

Let's see... All the Pup Lord mentioned was that the gate was in the north, right? There're crystal lotus flowers blooming further up, but I don't see anything of note from my villa window. I guess I may as well set out that way.

There's nothing in particular that catches my eye except for one suspicious point—a hill up ahead. Considering there's a road that goes that way, I really have no choice but to follow it. I doubt I'll find a bunch of undead having a picnic in a field or anything like that. The existence of a road tells me it must be something more important.

I've reached the top of the hill, but I don't see anything noteworthy.

I look around a little more carefully as I make my way further ahead, and my Silver Key suddenly begins to move. It starts opening something on its own, showing the same animation it does when I teleport somewhere.

Just when the air looks like it's going to tear apart, the image before me suddenly changes. A giant gate stands in front of me with *something* sitting on a platform before it. The thing sways on top of a glowing sphere and emits a deep noise.

'UMR AT-TAWIL LV. 100

Attribute: ?

Weakness: ?

Resistance: ?

Genus: Divinity

Species: Incarnation of?????

Status: Asleep

Um... Now I know I've arrived at my destination. My story route always involves Cthulhu-related characters, which is why I reread the Call of Cthulhu rulebook and supplementary material. I felt like it would be more fun for me once I knew how the two worlds were different.

'Umr At-Tawil is the guardian of the Ultimate Gate. In its official story, it's the physical incarnation of Yog-Sothoth. Although, the writings mentioned that its name can mean Tawil-at'Umr which might imply it lives a long life.

I look to the Silver Key and see it's returned to its usual position next to the athame on my belt.

When I step forward, the creature falls silent and its status changes from "asleep" to "normal." It looks like I woke it up.

The being that slides off the pedestal resembles the silhouette of a person with a cloth draped over them. Despite this shape, its movements prove that it's no human underneath.

"It's too early for you."

The being points behind me, toward the exit, as its voice echoes directly in my mind. That voice resembles a man and a woman speaking at the same time, making it impossible to determine its gender.

I wonder if it will answer my questions...

"I believe this place leads through the Ultimate Gate and into the Medium. Do I have that right?"

"Indeed."

"Thank you very much. I'll be back some other time, then."

I won't put up a fight. Angering it would definitely be a bad idea. Now that I know where the Ultimate Gate is, I'll save the rest of my questions for the Lord of Tindalos.

I reach my hand out toward the darkness right behind me and watch the world instantly transform. I'm back on the top of the hill again.

I return to my villa and summon the Pup Lord.

"You want to learn the language?" he asks.

"No. I have some things I want to ask you."

"Oh?"

"I found the gate, but the incarnation there told me I was too early. Do you know what the requirements are?"

"How high is your Space Magic?"

"Let's see... It's level 35."

"Then your base level is what is lacking. Get to level 35 or higher and go back. What does your Space Recognition Expansion look like?"

"That's at level 14."

"Hmm. The one minimum requirement that remains is your base level, but the higher your Space Recognition Expansion, the easier it will be to reach your destination."

"Then the bare minimum is a base level of 35 or higher. What about Space Magic?" I ask.

"Level 30 or higher," the lord answers.

"I see... Thank you for your help."

"Indeed. The earlier you can get there, the better. Until next time."

I watch him fade into the corner of the statue, then I head to the Evernight Castle's library. Even if I level up right away, I doubt I'll be able to evolve unless I hit level 40.

I hope I can find something that will affect my skills... Maybe Instinct will activate?

I circle around the library, looking over the covers of every single book.

Oh! Instinct lit up on *Investigation Regarding Secret Art of Necromancy and Dream Caskets*. That title sure makes me curious.

Let's see, let's see...

So, you use magical energy to create a body with flesh and bones as the medium...?

Individual spirit bodies won't have enough willpower as servants, and without outside assistance, they cannot maintain their existences. Their master must use their own magical energy to preserve their bodies through the medium of an organism's flesh and bones.

Ah, so that's why spirit bodies also require flesh and bones in the form of capacity. The process is written down in the book.

Now for this "Dream Casket" thing... This also appears to be a bit, let's say, blasphemous. Or perhaps I should just call it a form of necromantic magic.

By fulfilling special requirements, you can now summon spirit bodies through Secret Art of Necromancy.

By fulfilling special requirements, you have gained extra arts through Secret Art of Necromancy.

Let's see what I got...hmm. I didn't really get any capacity changes for spirit body servants. This race is strong, as it has both physical and magical resistance, but Light and Holy magics are its fatal flaws.

The BBS also recommends against players choosing to be spirit bodies if they want to play as tanks. They say that, even if you carry a shield, you won't be able to stand your

ground against attacks. In other words, you'll suffer constant knockbacks...

ZOMBIE

Strength: C Dexterity: E Stamina: B Agility: F Intelligence: F Spirit: F

SKELETON

Strength: E Dexterity: C Stamina: C Agility: C Intelligence: F Spirit: F

LIVING ARMOR

Strength: C Dexterity: E Stamina: B Agility: D Intelligence: F Spirit: F

GHOST

Strength: F Dexterity: D Stamina: D Agility: E Intelligence: C Spirit: C

These really are extreme...

WOLF

Strength: D Dexterity: F Stamina: D Agility: B Intelligence: D Spirit: E

SKELETON WOLF

Strength: D Dexterity: E Stamina: C Agility: B Intelligence: E Spirit: F

When it comes to Necromantic Magic, the “body” given to a servant can change their abilities greatly, depending on whether you’re referring to their form or their appearance. It’s all very complicated.

Perhaps their form is a wolf, and their appearance is a skeleton. Or their form is a wolf, and their appearance is a zombie or a ghost. Living armor types are their own category.

Their stats are based on their forms, with slight adjustments coming from appearance. Resistance stats, however, are based on their appearance instead of the servant's form.

There's another important point I can't forget. These servants are turned into the undying, so their Intelligence and Spirit generally see a decrease. Although, I'm sure that when they go from undying to undead, their Intelligence and Spirit reach human levels.

On the other hand, the reduction in Intelligence means they're not as smart, which makes their magic damage downright depressing, as Necromantic Magic servants rely on their AI level.

This means I should switch from owls to ghosts. That's about it, right? Zombies are just too unremarkable.

Next up are my new extra arts.

DREAM CASKET:

This spell summons both a large and a small casket.

The large casket contains space to lay a corpse and surround them with their belongings.

The small casket contains only enough space for the belongings of the dead.

EPHEMERAL DOLL:

Summons the materialization of the corpse slumbering in the large casket with all of its burial items equipped.

Though its soul is long departed, its remaining memories rage about within its

now inhuman body.

Only a single being may be summoned.

EPHEMERAL BRILLIANCE:

Summons the materialization of the burial goods left in the small casket.

There is no limit on summoning amounts, but each instance of summoning consumes MP.

Unique effects possessed by burial items may be restricted.

According to the book, the caskets transcend time and space, meaning there's no need to worry about anything inside deteriorating.

"Burial items" refers to equipment. In other words, I no longer have to worry about preparing more than one piece of the same equipment. However, equipment with unique effects will be restricted. I suppose a total reconstruction would be overpowered. "May" is the key word there, though, so I assume there are rules that govern this.

The stronger the being was in life, the better the corpse enclosed in the large casket. The burial items also receive a buff if they were used by the person in life. Making use of this combination can result in the ultimate performance on the battlefield.

Living beings can't be enclosed in the casket. I'm sure undead would come for you if you tried to seal away a soul. All that's needed is the corpse. Perhaps it wants us to be careful about that...

Hmm... I first thought that I should enclose Lana's corpse, but she's not exactly a corpse anymore. That's a pity.

The caskets are called "dream" and "ephemeral," which makes them all temporary things. After all, you're making use of a corpse.

Let's see if I can bring out the caskets here. It looks like the ability requires quite a bit of space.

I return the book to the shelf, browse the titles a bit more for anything of interest, and then exit the library and return to my villa.

I summon the caskets and fill the small one with equipment. I guess I don't need that steel equipment now that I can summon multiple copies of it. My halchium one-handed hammer and magic red iron one-handed hammer seem like all the weapons I'll need. What a lovely little box, saving me so much money!

Also, it looks like almandine magi iron has turned into magic red iron. The middle word appears to change based on the color of the gem. Right now, the elements I need most are Light and Earth. Those will help me counter undead enemies and the aquatic enemies to the south respectively. That means the gems I need to acquire are celestite and amber.

If I'm going to craft them, I think it would be best to make an earth one-handed sword and light hammer. I'll have them crafted one at a time and sell my remaining ingots. Actually, even if I do sell them, I can just mine more from the ore vein at my house, so my stock will keep increasing no matter what.

Anyway, it's lunchtime soon, so I'll make what I can with the magi iron I have on hand.

I have a relaxing lunch before logging in. My first destination is Mr. Ertz's shop.

"Hey, your stuff's ready," he greets me.

"Thank you. May I sell you some steel equipment?"

"I can still resell it, so I don't mind."

"I've solved the issue of equipment for my servants."

"Well, isn't that good news?"

I receive sixty magi iron ingots and a kitchen knife from Mr. Ertz.

Then I sell him a steel one-handed sword, a one-handed hammer, a two-handed sword, a large shield, and a small shield. I receive a total of 50,000 gold.

“Could I request an enchanted one-handed sword and a hammer?” I ask.

“Uh-huh, uh-huh,” he replies.

“Also, how much would you sell them for if you put them on the market?”

“They’re a bit of a nuisance at the moment... How about half of the proceeds?”

“That’s a great deal. I’d like to aim for Earth and Light attributes.”

“To fight against aquatic and undying enemies? I think Fire’s gonna be popular too.”

Fire-enchanted swords are a balanced option. Although, in their current state, the effects aren’t too impressive.

“Considering their functions and you needing to fetch the materials, I’d price them above halchium. How does somewhere around 150,000 gold sound?” Mr. Ertz asks me.

“That’s fine with me. By the way, how much for the sword and hammer on their own?”

“Crafting those will benefit me too, so accounting for materials, I can give you both for 100,000.”

“Then that’s what I’d like to order. I’ll process the materials myself.”

“Sounds good.”

I return to my villa and synthesize magi iron, gems, and magic stones. I should also buy more magic stones to replenish my stock soon.

The plus side of Alchemy is how little time it takes. I end up with eleven Fire ingots, six of Water, three of Wind, nine of Earth, three of Light, and eight of Dark for a total of forty pieces. I bring them back to Mr. Ertz’s shop.

“Delivery!” I call out.

“Oh, thanks a bunch!” he answers.

I don't want to stand around and chat in his store, so we relocate to the workshop. It's the perfect place for secret conversations, since you need his permission to enter.

"So you've got magic red iron, magic blue iron, magic green iron, magic gold iron, magic sky iron, and magic dusk iron?" he asks.

As the names suggest, the iron gains a faint hue of the attribute's corresponding color. Red is for Fire, blue is for Water, green is for Wind, gold is for Earth, sky is a white color for Light, while dusk is black, representing the element of Dark. Visually, the magic dusk iron is the most plain of them all. Iron mixed with the color black isn't very remarkable.

This confirms that the naming conventions consist of the gem name followed by the ingot name.

Fire: almandine. Water: lapis lazuli. Wind: nephrite. Earth: amber. Light: celestite. Dark: hematite.

As for metals, magi iron is currently all that I have, so that part goes at the very end of the name.

"Looks like making as many as possible will benefit me the most... Forty pieces in total... All right, here's your cut," Mr. Ertz tells me.

"Oh, what a great price," I reply.

"Sure. This might be the only time I can maximize my profits on them, since we haven't discovered any dungeons yet."

That's right...magi iron is usually supposed to be found in dungeons. Supply of the metal might not be limited for much longer. If more people find out that it can be crafted with Alchemy, I predict more and more players will start choosing that trade for themselves. Perhaps my days of making profits are limited too.

With that, I've received roughly two million gold. Well, to put it more accurately, 1.95 million. Now that I have five million in savings, I should finally buy a kitchen.

Next, I receive the one-handed magic gold iron sword and one-handed magic sky iron hammer I requested.

"I've been wondering... Can you not make elemental bows?" Mr. Ertz asks.

"I don't have a recipe for those at the moment. Couldn't you just make elemental arrowheads?"

"I feel like they'd be too expensive for a consumable item."

"Even if we reach the point where we can mine magi iron in dungeons, I suppose there're still gems and magic stones..."

We believe that certain enemies drop magic stones, making them items with an "uncommon" drop rate. If you aim for the right targets, you can get a fair amount of stones. Gems, however, are rare items.

"Using Assignment Magic on bows probably does the trick..." I comment.

"Yeah. Hell, maybe there're elemental trees out there too."

"Do you think so? I haven't seen such outlandish fantasy elements yet..."

"The Triffid was an event enemy, I guess... But we haven't even explored half the map yet. We might still find them in all that undiscovered land."

"That's true. We haven't even set foot on the continent to the south yet."

I suppose the Nether could be called a fantasy world in its own right. Not only is it the afterlife, but it's full of undead. Anyway, now that my errands are finished, it's time to take my leave. I know Mr. Ertz has weapons to craft.

I leave Mr. Ertz's shop and head to the town square.

"Hyah ha ha ha! Well, if it isn't the princess!"

I recognize that voice. When I turn around, as expected, Mr. Mohawk is standing there.

"Good day, Mr. Mohawk."

"It's a good day, all right! I'm throbbin'!"

"*What part of you is throbbing?!*" shouts a bystander.

"Well, I suppose that's better than having a bad day, isn't it?" I remark.

"Gyah ha ha ha! That's for damn sure!"

Mr. Mohawk might be a bit too much for third-wavers. Seeing him for the first time really packs a punch. First-wavers have known him for a while, though, and second-wavers are probably used to him by now too.

"It's Tasha!" cries Abby.

"Oh my, it's that overcommitted roleplayer again," Eli remarks.

Eli and Abby are here? As always, Ms. Letty and Ms. Dory are behind them.

"Hyah ha ha ha! Aren't you two pretty committed too?" Mr. Mohawk remarks.

"Well, I suppose that's true..." answers Eli.

"I see you managed to purchase dresses and maid uniforms," I greet them.

"The shopkeeper gave us discounts because he said our dresses would be good advertisements!" Abby cheers.

"He contacted us and said he could make them now. We put in our requests, naturally," explains Eli, who is wearing a black and red X-line fishtail dress.

Ms. Letty is wearing the typical Victorian-style classical maid uniform with a long skirt that you'd typically see in anime.

Abby's dress is white and blue in a balloon style. The skirt is on the shorter side.

Ms. Dory wears what appears to be a Victorian maid's uniform that's been altered into something of a steampunk fighter design. She wears a long skirt too.

Eli's dress is elegant and mature, while Abby's is designed to look cute. Both could be called party dresses, and I can tell they know which styles suit them.

"I'm the only one without a servant. Shall I call Unit One?" I ask.

"Does he have a butler's uniform? Wait...he's a skeleton, right?" comments Eli.

"Hyah ha ha ha! You ought to get a living armor to walk around as your knight!" Mr. Mohawk suggests.

"I see."

"Actually, that seems like a good idea."

Could I summon Unit One and have the villa staff teach him how to act? At his AI level, I feel like it's possible. I'll have to give it a try the next time I'm at home to craft.

"I recognize you! You're the 'hyah ha' mohawk guy!" cries Abby.

"Hyah ha! I'm here to sterilize filth!"

"Wow!"

"Please don't imitate him, okay?" I warn her.

"That won't happen," Ms. Dory jumps in. She warns the now stern-faced Abby that while it's okay to watch him, she should never mimic his actions. Well, I suppose that's good advice.

Even Mr. Mohawk felt obligated to nod his head, an awkward smile plastered on his face. I know he probably doesn't want her to imitate him either.

"Heh heh... By the way, Mr. Mohawk. How are things going for you in the game?" I ask him.

"Pretty good. I'm almost ready to set out for the next area. Hee hee hee!"

"The fourth area? Do you think I should try to get there too? The east would be the best destination. What about you guys?" I ask the others.

"We're almost at the third area," Eli replies.

"You've made quick progress."

"Right? That's what happens when you have information to work with."

I see. Having information is indeed an advantage. I'm sure the game is much easier for

newcomers who don't have to spend time figuring out things like skill unlock conditions. The same goes for information on the hunting grounds. That's sure to help them out.

Right now, the only area boss is the one between Starting Town and the second area. Defeating the golems and other bosses made it possible to pass from the second to the third area without much trouble. Whether or not you're able to hunt there is a different story, however.

As I remember it, going from the second to the third area on the eastern side is difficult unless you're strong enough to defeat the horses there.

"That reminds me, Abby. Are you still looking for magic clay?" I ask.

"Yes! Did you make high quality clay?"

"I got up to A-tier, which I think should do the trick."

"How much would you like for it?"

"Um...how about 15,000? I just don't have much clay to sell."

"I'd like four pieces!"

"That's perfect."

"Yay! I'm gonna make a lot after this!"

Abby is a puppeteer, after all. It sounds like she's also making her own magic clay too. Magic clay made with Nether materials is suited for dolls, so this should be perfect.

"By the way, Eli, have you visited my house? I exchanged my event points for tea saplings, and now that they're planted, I hope to harvest tea leaves soon," I tell her.

"I haven't stopped by yet. We exchanged our points for those too, but we have no home base to plant them at yet."

"We might just buy a field!" Abby interjects.

"No, what I want is a house. It's just hard, considering the amount of land we'll need,"

Eli says.

"I saw a big house on a field nearby!" says Abby.

"You mean outside town?" I ask her.

"Yep!"

Has that always been there? It must be the work of a player. There's not much use left for the land around Starting Town, so I haven't been there in a while... I don't remember seeing it in the north, so it must be on the other side.

"Isn't that the guild house for Steiner and his boys? It's in the west, yeah?" asks Mr. Mohawk.

"Yes, that's it!"

"Ah, so it belongs to the farmers? They must have built a house on the field they built. They formed a guild, right?" I ask.

"Yep. They're called Farmers' Uprising."

Farmers' Uprising... It sounds like they're out for blood. But the important part of this story is that they were able to buy cheap land outside of town and then build their own house on it. Finite land is a first-come, first-served acquisition, so if anyone wanted it, now would be the time to act.

There are other town perimeters outside of Starting Town, so if you want space, you could always look elsewhere. The only problem is, if a world quest is held nearby, it's possible that your property could get caught up in it.

Anyone to the area south of Starting Town will have to be careful. I'm not sure about the other towns.

It sounds like they're all going out to hunt, so we say goodbye at this point.

I think I'll stop by the union, buy some more magic stones, and then do some hunting myself. Today's destination is the east so I can gather capacity.

Considering that players will soon reach a base level of 40, now is the time to stock up. Even at the best of times, I never have enough capacity.

All right, time to pay some enemies a visit. Mr. Troll! And an ogre too. Hmph... If all I need is capacity, maybe I should head to the part of the second area with weaker enemies. It all depends on their size. Hmm...I'll start with the second area, then head to the third area once I'm bored.

Time to get hunting.

CHAPTER 9

SUNDAY

I WAKE UP AND MOVE my body a bit. I need a certain amount of muscle to preserve my body shape and posture. However, I don't want my muscles to get too defined, so I only do a moderate amount of exercise.

Once I'm finished, I log in around 10 a.m.

Yesterday, I reached Rank D at the adventurers' union. That took a while, since I don't bring them anything after my hunts, but there's nothing I can do about that. Capacity matters more to me than quest rewards from the union.

Now that I know the requirements to reach my next evolution event, I should prioritize leveling up. That will earn me capacity at the same time, so leveling up is always a go-to activity. I earned some capacity in the second area yesterday but not much EXP.

I think I should set the fourth area in my sights. But before that, I'll visit Lana while it's still morning. I head from my villa to the training grounds.

"Lana, let's practice Counter Style."

"Of course. Shall we begin?"

This is the last of the styles I'd heard about so far. I wonder if I'll get anything special once I learn it. I have a feeling it'll start a quest, which I'm excited about.

By fulfilling special requirements, you have gained an extra art through Unparalleled Style.

"THE MAKING OF A MASTER"

Gain the approval of Svetlana, your sword teacher.

1. Learn seven “styles.”

2. Learn two “superior combined sub-forms.”

Quest giver: Svetlana

Reward: Title

It looks like the quest changed. It appears that there are two superior combinations of styles.

“Would you like to try the next derivation?” Svetlana asks me.

“What would that be?”

“There’s Ex Anti-Human Style; Ex Airflow Style; and their combined school, Ex2 Unsheathed Style. There’s also the combination of Ex Waterflow Style and Ex Mirror Style, which is called Ex2 Reflection Style.”

“Then I’d like to learn Reflection Style.”

“Very well. Reflection Style is a method that emphasizes dodging and reflecting attacks. The stance itself isn’t very difficult, but it’s much harder to implement in a real fight.”

She goes on to say that Waterflow and Mirror are pretty similar, so that will make Reflection Style less complicated for me. It sounds like Unsheathed Style is the harder one.

Anyway, I’ll have her teach me until lunchtime, just as I planned.

Since I’m so close to learning it, I delay lunch a bit, learn Ex2 Reflection Style, have my lunch, then log back in for the afternoon.

Now what should I do? Hmm...I'll take a look at the housing menu. My war chest has grown to five million gold.

[FURNITURE] KITCHEN III

Rarity: RA Quality: C Price: 750,000

This option places the very best cooking utensils, the same ones used by the royal palace's head chef, in your home.

Select your desired shape: Island, peninsula, I-shape, L-shape, or separated.

Cooking quality increase: Great

[FURNITURE] COOKING BOX

Rarity: LE Quality: C Price: 1,000,000

This box allows you to store cooking ingredients in your home.

You may also link it with cooking utensils in the same room.

Select your desired placement orientation: Landscape, portrait

Infinite storage.

[FURNITURE] FULLY AUTOMATIC BREAD MACHINE

Rarity: RA Quality: C Price: 250,000

A machinery set that allows you to make any kind of bread dough.

Add the ingredients, set the time and temperature, and then simply wait for it to get the job done!

[FURNITURE] FULLY AUTOMATIC SMOKER

Rarity: RA Quality: C Price: 250,000

A machinery set that allows you to create any kind of smoked food.

Add the ingredients, set the time and temperature, and then simply wait for it to get the job done!

[FURNITURE] FULLY AUTOMATIC NOODLE MAKER

Rarity: RA Quality: C Price: 250,000

A machinery set that allows you to create any kind of noodle.

Add the ingredients, select the noodles you want, and then simply wait for it to get the job done!

[FURNITURE] FULLY AUTOMATIC SAUSAGE MAKER

Rarity: RA Quality: C Price: 250,000

A machinery set that allows you to create any kind of sausage.

Add the ingredients, select the variety and thickness, and then simply wait for it to get the job done!

I'd definitely like all of these. But 2.75 million gold...?

I can't find a separate stove, so it must be part of Kitchen III. There are some other things that catch my eye...

[FURNITURE] FULLY AUTOMATIC STILL

Rarity: RA Quality: C Price: 500,000

This machine can produce distilled water and increase alcohol concentration. It even fills bottles for you.

Places a single pot still in your room.

A higher concentration of mana will increase the machine's efficiency.

You may also add glass to the machine to make it produce bottles, but bottle crafting speed depends on mana concentration.

Maximum alcohol concentration: Three times the amount of the base alcohol.

[FURNITURE] FULLY AUTOMATIC CONNECTED STILLS

Rarity: LE Quality: C

Price: 1,000,000/1,500,000

This machine can produce distilled water and increase alcohol concentration. It even fills bottles for you.

Places a plate column made with outsiders' knowledge next to a pot still.

A higher concentration of mana will increase the machine's efficiency.

You may also add glass to the machine to make it produce bottles, but bottle crafting speed depends on mana concentration.

Maximum alcohol concentration: Three times the amount of the base alcohol up to 90%.

This is what I'm looking for. It's essentially a massive still—or rather, a brewery.

The rooms of my royal villa are rather large, but to be honest, this would still leave them with very little floor space left. If I get the automatic still, the automatic connected stills cost 1,000,000 gold. Hmm...adding a new room brings the cost to 2,100,000.

I don't need a new room, so my total for everything comes out to 4,250,000 gold. On the other hand, I don't even use much distilled water. It's better for me to sell magic grass from my fields to Ms. Salute, and I have white liquor from my magic seasoning sets. For now, I can say goodbye to the fully automated still.

I wonder if I can make fruit wine out of holy punica. I may as well set some aside to see if it works. I can't drink it, but that's fine with me. I'll have a servant harvest it.

While I wait, I purchase my cooking furniture, tear down a wall, and combine two rooms to make my kitchen. Then I place a double door in the center of the wall. It looks like small changes like these don't cost any money.

As for the kitchen layout, I select the "separated" style. To the left of the entrance, I place stovetops against the wall in an L-shape. Then I move over a bit and place down three workbenches with sinks, leaving space between each one. Otherwise, I won't be able to reach all the large appliances.

Then I place the four automatic machines on the right side of the room. I also fill the gaps between them with workbenches and place machines slightly bigger than the stovetops on the other side. The smoker can go on the back right side of the room next to the window. I'll place them in order of smoker, bread machine, noodle maker, and sausage maker.

There's some empty space for me to place my cooking box, which I lay in portrait orientation. As for the cooking utensils, it appears that I can access the cooking box straight from my kitchen counters without having to make a separate trip. Naturally, it's also capable of linking with the fully automatic magic devices.

Yes, this seems good for now.

A lady-in-waiting arrives to deliver me holy punica, which I wash with Laundry before cutting them up, leaving a bit of skin on the fruit.

Then I place them in a bottle, add sugar and white liquor, and let them sit to ferment. They'll become wine in three months at the earliest, but up to half a year is ideal. I wonder how long it takes in the game?

Fairellen has arrived for a visit.

Oh, that's unusual. I exit the kitchen since I'm done with my tasks.

"Howdy!" she greets me.

"Good day. What brings you here?"

"I came to see if I can harvest nectar!"

"Ah, I see. Let's try it out."

The property I live on has fields of crystal lotuses and rivers of water of reminiscence, stretching from the front gates right up to my house itself. Ms. Fairellen is here to see if, as a fairy race, she can harvest that unique fairy nectar from crystal lotuses.

The two of us confirm that she can indeed harvest nectar, pick the flower she harvested from, and see no drop in quality in the flower itself.

"Cooooool! Can I harvest nectar here from now on?"

"I don't mind. It's not like those of us here can harvest it."

"That's true... I'll be sure to leave some of it for you as thanks."

"I appreciate that. If I'm not around, you can give it to one of my ladies-in-waiting."

"Okay! Heh heh heh heh. The nectar quality I get here is so high!"

My gardener takes care of the property, so the flowers are probably nicer than those found in the wild. The fields in the backyard aren't of use to Ms. Fairellen, as they don't contain flowers.

Let's see. Nectar... Honey... Beekeeping?

[FURNITURE] GRAVITAS HIVE

Rarity: EP Quality: C Price: 450,000

This technology, beloved for its ease of use by both honeybees and beekeepers, was brought in by outsiders.

Honey pours out from the bottom of the hive by simply twisting the top portion.

[FURNITURE] HONEYBEES

Rarity: NO Quality: C Price: 200,000

You've managed to capture a species of honeybee that collects the nectar of various flowers.

These bees aren't aggressive, but if you steal all the food they worked so hard to make, they'll get angry.

Try not to steal too much of it.

Allows for the harvesting of honey and royal jelly.

[FURNITURE] MILITARY MAGIC BATTLE BEES

Rarity: EP Quality: C Price: 800,000

You've managed to capture a species of honeybee that collects the nectar of various flowers.

They're unusually aggressive for their species. Not only that, but they use magic too.

As the name suggests, they move like an army, so it's next to impossible to avoid them when you take their nectar.

Their incredibly valuable honey is abundant in nutrients and magical energy. It's sure to make your doctor cry.

Allows for the harvesting of honey and royal jelly.

Is this some sort of joke, Mr. Yamamoto?

“What sane person even goes and captures these bees in the first place?”

“It’s rude to point out inconsistencies in the flavor text,” Ms. Fairellen scolds me.

Well... The best box is 450,000 gold. Normal bees are 200,000, while the ones that seem best are 800,000.

I’m not sure what to do about these. It sounds like I can get both honey and royal jelly from them. I assume they’re good for your health, but that might not matter to me as a zombie. The only thing food can affect is your body shape—if players want to make changes to their skin, they have to go back to the character creator.

In that case, wouldn’t it be best to sell it to residents? They can make sweets and mead with honey. In fact, I should probably sell the mead to Ms. Mead.

But 1.25 million...? I would be losing a total of four million gold, leaving me with one million in savings. Then again, I’ll probably be selling elemental metals to Mr. Ertz for a while, so I don’t think money is *actually* a problem for me.

I have plenty of room, and I don’t think it will cause any issues for Ms. Fairellen. I’m not even sure if the game considers bee nectar to be the same as hers.

I ask a lady-in-waiting to call the gardener, who then looks for a place to put them.

“Bees, huh? How about over here?” he suggests.

It appears that the extra-large box is split into multiple crates. I place them where the gardener indicates.

Then I purchase the military magic battle bees and link them with the box. Bees immediately start to fly around. They sure are large... I see some that are fifteen or twenty centimeters long. There are also smaller, two-centimeter-long bees in there.

"Is that their normal size?" I ask him.

"Oh, would you like an explanation about military magic battle bees?"

"Yes, please."

"First of all, as you can see, the name refers to how they exist as an army."

That makes sense. The largest are called royal vespinae, while the next size down are the royal hornets. The smallest, though they're still plenty large for bees, are royal carpenter maids.

"The bees inside are called regina apis. The royal vespinae command the royal hornets, and the royal carpenter maids are the ones who gather the pollen and nectar. There are queens, knights, and maids amongst them. They move as an army and fight with spells, which is why they're called 'military magic battle bees.'"

One squadron consists of a level 54 royal vespinae and five level 52 royal hornets. They form these units and fly around a certain radius from their nest—a few units at a time, of course. All of them hold lances in their right hands and shields in their left.

But the real worker bees of this arrangement are the royal carpenter maids. They're constantly going back and forth between the nest and the crystal lotuses.

"You can tell them apart based on size, but the ones with large shields are vespinae. Hornets use circular shields. Both of them hold up their shields and charge with their lances out. Their stingers contain deadly poison that they'll send shooting at you sometimes too. Well, not that the poison affects us undead," the gardener explains.

"It's pretty easy to tell them apart since they have such different shapes. So you're able to harvest nectar from that hive, huh?" I ask.

"It's no problem for any of us. I'd be happy to harvest it."

"Then we should go ahead and preserve it for later."

I first explain to the gardener how to use the gravitas hive. The description stated that the technology came from outsiders, so he probably doesn't know how it functions. The way that both honey and royal jelly come out as separate items really makes this system feel like a typical video game.

I'll preserve the royal jelly in potion bottles. As for the honey, I'll keep it in whatever large containers I have and store them both in my cooking box.

Having someone to harvest them automatically will make this process a breeze. Although, regardless of who harvests it, the quality of the items probably depends on my housing environment.

I suppose I should craft a lot of glass now...

It would be interesting to see if, after many generations, the land they reside in causes the bees to evolve somehow.

I check in on Ms. Fairellen to see how she's doing.

"I'm really scared of those bees!" she cries.

"They won't attack you unless you get close to their hive," my gardener explains. "Simply back away if the sound of their wings gets louder. Also, they'll swarm you if you do anything to the small maid bees."

"How does that sound?" I ask her.

"Huh... I imagine we won't steal each other's nectar, so I guess it's fine. How much did they cost?" asks Ms. Fairellen.

"The box is 450,000 gold and the bees are 800,000."

"So, 1.25 million...? I wonder if honey or fairy nectar is better."

"Would you happen to know?" I ask the gardener.

"Both were treated as luxury items long ago. The fairy nectar was sold for less, as you didn't have to put your life on the line to get it, but the taste of both items is as good as it gets. Neither are circulated widely."

It's possible to harvest lots of nectar from the battle bees at once, though you'd be risking your life to do it. Harvesting fairy nectar is perfectly safe, but you need to know a fairy to get it and can only harvest tiny amounts at a time.

The gardener also explains that the tastes are slightly different, so everyone has different preferences.

He returns to work after this, so we say goodbye.

"Ah, that's right. There's something I wanted to ask you about, Princess," Ms. Fairellen informs me.

"Is that right?"

"Uh-huh. Do you think playing as a mercenary in this game is viable at all?"

"A mercenary? Do you mean joining parties when they need help and receiving gold or items as a reward?"

"Yep, that's it!"

"Is that your plan?"

"I brought it up on the BBS. Studylover said it's probably possible but that I should ask for your opinion if I was serious about trying it."

Oh...? Ah, I see. Mr. Studylover must be worried about how that would go over with Stellura. Working with a mercenary is a contract, so he wanted Ms. Fairellen to check with me. Certainly, I'm likely to know the most about Stellura of any player.

The question remains about playing as a mercenary. "To start from the conclusion, yes, it should be possible," I conclude after a bit of thought.

"Oh, you think so?"

"I do... But you need to make sure you define the terms of your contract, even if it's just a verbal promise. The best thing to do as a mercenary player would be to write up contract documents in advance."

"It goes for verbal promises too?"

"If you're not going to devote yourself to Stellura, then verbal promises shouldn't hurt you. But it becomes a gray area once rewards are involved. Writing up a paper contract and breaking it is definitely against the rules."

"I see..."

"I think it's best to write up documents, both in terms of roleplaying and for peace of mind. A loophole is to write the contract in a way that exploits the other party. But if you use that method, it's game over. It will explode automatically and destroy the traitor. Mercenaries operate based on trust, so everyone knows that they won't betray you. Contract documents are very important in this world. But since there's no need to read into the deeper meaning of the documents, in a way, it's actually the easier option."

Everything written on the paper means what it says. Therefore, it's simple enough to merely follow exactly what's stated. Whether that's a good or a bad thing depends on who you ask. The more honest the person, the less they care about this mechanic.

"As for verbal promises, you can't simply look back in the log to see what you said. They're quite a headache, which is why it would probably be best to draw up documents if you want to play as a mercenary."

"So it requires a time period, reward, and contract details? Sounds like it's smart to avoid a contract with complicated details."

"Indeed. It might also simplify things to write something like 'Disadvantageous actions taken against the other party are forbidden.' That should prevent betrayals."

You have to be strong to play as a mercenary character, but that's not relevant to what she's asking. I'm sure she's well aware of that fact too.

The reward probably depends on what the mercenary is helping with, but you could also come up with a template contract to fill in with different details each time.

"It's possible to become famous as a mercenary. I think it's a valid playstyle and seems easy to roleplay too. Plus, if you're drawing up contracts, the game will probably feel even more like an RPG that way."

"So, if you've got the skills for it, you can pretty much do whatever you want, just as long as you don't betray anyone, right?"

"Correct. You'll earn more money for employment if you're good at it. I can see a mercenary thread being created on the BBS someday."

There could even be mercenary rankings—combined scores of time active, abilities, and how easy they are to work with. Naturally, the higher your score, the more you can charge.

It might be a fun job to do from time to time... Not that I'm sure I'll have the time.

"What are your plans after this, Princess?" Ms. Fairellen asks me.

"I'm not quite sure. I could do some cooking now that I've purchased a kitchen, but I'd like to save that for weekdays."

"Oh, you got a kitchen?"

"I spent four million gold today alone. I need to save up more money, but I'd like some furniture too. I also need to finally get my hands on some accessories."

"Huh? You still have slots open?"

"I have seven slots open."

"For real...? That's half of all your slots!"

There are fourteen accessory slots in total: one for your neck, one for ears, one for wrists, one for ankles, and ten for fingers. If I filled every slot as intended, I'd be wearing a necklace, earrings, bracelet, anklet, and ten rings, all at the same time. The earrings, bracelets, and anklets come in sets of two, so you can wear one on each side of your body.

However, this game allows you a relative amount of freedom. If you have other equipment slots open, you can attach items to yourself in a way so they still have the same effect. In my case, I have my guardianship equipment in the form of a necklace, earrings, and bracelet that take up my neck, ears, and wrist slots. My ring that raises my Dexterity is a drop from the southern boss. I have two more rings that come from my guardianship equipment, for a total of six slots used. Up to this point, everything is working as intended.

The problem comes down to the Silver Key. The Silver Key is treated as "[Equipment-

Accessory]," which means it takes up an accessory slot. I can't use it on my fingers, naturally; nor can I use it on my ears and wrists. It's a twelve-centimeter-long key. I don't think there would be a problem if I could wear it from my neck around a chain, but I already have my guardianship necklace in that slot.

The Silver Key is well known for being pointless unless equipped, so I have to use an accessory slot to keep it active. That's why I use a spot on my pouch belt to hang the key. This allows me to keep it equipped.

You can place items where you like due to the freedom of choice the game allows you. In other words, you don't necessarily have to equip your rings to your fingers, although I can picture certain items demanding that you equip them in certain ways too.

Those are my seven accessory slots in use. I have seven more that are open.

"It's such a waste to have open slots!" Ms. Fairellen exclaims.

"That's true. I'd like to request some accessories from Ms. Nephrite, but I just spent so much money on my housing environment. I also bought equipment and a saddle for my servants."

"Ah... You've gotta craft for servants that can use equipment, right?"

Housing is certainly the most expensive purchase of any of those, though. I'm sure it's meant as late-game content in the first place, and houses are always going to cost a lot of money. However, everything I've purchased so far has been for production, so what I've really done is make an initial investment.

I'm glad that I've acquired spacious land, a manor, and unique items to harvest, but it's all a little lacking for an MMO residence. Why is that? Because I can't show it off to everyone. It doesn't exist on the normal map, so you can't catch sight of it from a distance.

That's why I don't really feel motivated to add more to it. My home is probably going to be nothing more than storage and a production environment.

At the very least, I'm glad to have a space to invite Eli and Abby for tea parties. I also love my crystal lotus fields, even though I now have giant bees out there... Oh well. It's best not to sweat the details.

"But I believe I've finished my initial investment now," I conclude.

"You use Cooking and Alchemy, right, Princess? I haven't even bought a house yet!"

"Oh, you haven't?"

"I've just been waiting to see if there's a land for fairies in this world, so I'm waiting to buy one for a while."

"A fairy land...? That must be hard to search for."

"Yeah, for sure. Different games cover so many different concepts, so I have to search from a meta perspective."

The most likely location seems like it would be inside a barrier within the forest. However, I haven't heard anything about the humans and fairies of this world having bad blood between them. The fairies are just a little mischievous. There's no reason for them to hide out in the forest, is there? Wait, that's right...fairies don't count as a human race. There's no reason for humans to get worked up and go after them, but there're also no positive exchanges between the two races. Maybe that's why fairy nectar is so expensive? I haven't gathered information about fairies, so I really don't know.

"The prime minister knows about many topics. It's just that his information is quite outdated," I tell Ms. Fairellen.

"Has he been around a long time?"

"Well, yes. He's a lich race, after all."

"I see."

"Oh, but why don't you ask someone who's died recently instead?" I ask her.

"That makes sense. But would they know anything about it? Is it the type of thing the average person would know?"

"Well...I'm not sure if even the most powerful people would know about fairy secrets...but I bet Ms. Sophie knows something."

“Sophie? Oh right, the witch girl!”

“I’ll have to ask her when I go to the church.”

“Please do!” she says.

Ms. Fairellen returns to the field to harvest more nectar. I think I’ll head aboveground now.

I teleport to Starting Town’s town square. I may as well ask Ms. Sophie about fairies right away, so I head to the church and ask a nearby nun if she’s around.

She is, so I confirm that she’s free before heading to her room.

“Good day, Ms. Sophie. I’m sorry to drop in on you like this.”

“Mm-hmm...”

Despite the church setting, her room is full of beakers and test tubes like some sort of laboratory. She’s also surrounded by mountains of paper.

“A fairy friend of mine is searching for a land of fairies. Would you happen to know anything about that?”

“There’s an island to the southwest of here that only certain people can see. Any fairy race should be able to spot it,” Ms. Sophie replies.

“An island? Do you know the exact conditions to see it?”

“Any fairy or person sensitive to magical energy and mana should spot it... But greedy people might not be able to make it out safely if they go.”

“Greedy people?”

“Mm-hmm...they’ll just be killed by the fairies on the island.”

“Ah, I see.”

"It's the Land of Youth ruled by the fairy king Oberon and his queen, Titania: Tír na nÓg. It's a paradise with yummy apples, pork that restores you to life, and delicious booze."

Wow...that sounds like a fantasy story, all right. Oberon and Titania are very recognizable names. It seems they went with Shakespeare instead of the Merovingian dynasty or French epics. Oberon and Titania come from Shakespeare, but I believe Tír na nÓg is from Celtic mythology. I just hope the husband and wife aren't fighting...

Well, I'll have to make a note of this, at least.

"I'll tell her that it exists in the southwestern sea. Thank you very much," I say to her.

"Mm-hmm. By the way, I heard you're a holy maiden now."

"Holy maiden?"

"You don't know? People with divine protection are called 'holy maidens' and they usually belong to the church. They're those who have received oracles or those beloved by a god... In other words, holy maidens."

"I haven't heard of that. I do have Stellura's blessing, but Ms. Luciana hasn't exactly tried to solicit me."

"Hmm, I see... I guess she didn't want to take on a Nemeseia, even if you *are* a holy maiden. Considering a Nemeseia's military power, political power, and influence, it's best for her to keep a friendly relationship with you instead of taking you in and risk messing things up."

Belonging to the church, huh...? Does that mean I would be used, or would I be protected? As a religious institution, the church would probably do both.

Ms. Luciana has always seemed very virtuous in her interactions with me. Her soul and karma are clean too—white in color; meaning there shouldn't be any issues there. Ms. Sophie's soul is white as well. That means she's generally a good person.

Ms. Sophie should also have all the same influence as myself being a sorciere. She must really trust Ms. Luciana if she's still staying here.

I can imagine that villagers who receive divine protection are taken in by the church.

The church would be capable of spreading the divine prophecy that person received, and they also have knights to physically protect them.

But things would get quite complicated if *I* joined the church. It might even fracture their power. I could be forcibly used as the figurehead for a power struggle—the kind of thing you hear about a lot.

I may be a holy maiden, but I'm also royalty. As the leader of the Nether, I can't treat people poorly. I have my own army in the Nether too. My army has no obligations to the surface world, yet I could use my Silver Key to teleport them directly to the middle of the country.

On top of that, I'm still an outsider, so I physically can't be assassinated if the residents try to target me. I also can't be brainwashed or poisoned due to my status as undead, nor can I be imprisoned thanks to the Silver Key. Quite frankly, I'm unbeatable.

Ms. Luciana's conclusion to focus only on maintaining a friendly relationship with me is probably the right way to go. The fact that I have Stellura's blessing might act as a tranquilizer to the residents. In this world, someone not having a problem with you is the ultimate protection.

However, this also means I could become the ultimate ally from the perspective of royalty who want to restore their country or a respectable noble. I don't mind that sort of thing if the request comes from an organization, not just the country itself.

Darkness and Light Vision allows me to check the color of a noble's soul—their karma. Then I can report that to the king. The king would then order his royal guard to search the subject's home. Any evidence found leads to punishment by the law. Even if nothing turns up, I can use Blade of Arbitration to question them. This skill only inflicts suffering, not physical harm. In other words, their HP won't decrease—it just really hurts. Blade of Arbitration is clearly meant for roleplaying. I also have the Arbitrator skill that increases damage based on karma, so it would be better for them to just give up and confess.

Running away would be the same as admitting guilt, and since I can't be taken out via assassination, it'd be game over for them. Oh, you've committed suicide? Then I'll see you in the Abyss. I won't let you get away from me. Now that I've been summoned, it's already over for you. You can only blame yourself for my presence. I won't show you any mercy!

...Yes, I've reached a state where roleplaying definitely seems like it would be worthwhile. I'll be sure to enjoy it.

Anyway, I feel like I would much rather be requested as an ally instead of being taken in by an organization.

"Ah, that's right. Do you know any nearby dungeons, Ms. Sophie?" I ask her.

"Hmm...there's one between Valuwasse and Finfelden, and one between Bernrae and Langreno."

Ms. Sophie beckons me closer and takes out a map to show me the location of the dungeons. I also learn the town names from her.

Your area map has been updated due to new information.

Let's see... The dungeons are in areas 4-5 and 4-20? Heading northeast from Fellforge, which is also northeast of here, takes you to Valuwasse. Heading southeast from Valuwasse, you'll find a mountain with a dungeon. You can also go to Barberek in the east and head farther east to reach Finfelden. Two blocks to the north is another mountain with a dungeon.

To the northwest is Bellafonte. Farther northwest of that is Bernrae. From Bernrae, you go southwest for a bit and then farther south to reach a dungeon. You can also stop at Tilivetta to the west and head even farther west to reach Langreno. There's a dungeon two blocks above Langreno to the north.

"The northeast mountain dungeon is a cave, and the western one is a forest."

"Oh, does that mean I can mine magi iron in the northeast?"

"Since it's a cave, yeah."

I see... This is the only time in the game where I'll be able to make a huge profit from that, so I'll be sure to get to it!

I've obtained some information about dungeons, but that doesn't guarantee I'll be able to reach one. They all exist in the fourth area, after all. I need to unlock the towns first, so I don't think I can get to the dungeons just yet.

I thank Ms. Sophie, refill her water of reminiscence using my infinite canteen, and leave the church.

I then inform Ms. Fairellen of what I learned about the fairy island and wish her luck.

All right. I think I'll spend the day leveling up. I want to spend my weekdays crafting and getting some language studying in, so I'll be sure to do some hunting over the weekend.

I should reach my desired level by next week. I imagine Mr. Skelly and Mr. Alf will want to reach the fourth area, so I'll hunt in the east to prepare. That will get me more capacity too. I wonder if the game will have another event any time soon... A quest would be fine too, though. As long as I get lots of EXP, I'll be happy with anything.

CHAPTER 10

WEEKDAYS: MONDAY-FRIDAY

“SIT DOWN! Class is starting!”

Our teacher arrives a bit after the bell rings. “Okay, I’ve got news. We’re getting transfer students!”

“*Huh?*”

“Come on in!”

Really? It seems strange to receive transfer students one week after summer break.

“Pfft!” The sounds of Tomohiro and Suguru bursting out laughing reach my ears. All I can do is cradle my head.

“I don’t remember them saying they came back after summer break... They were playing the game like normal...”

It’s none other than Eli and Abby. This is the first I’m hearing of this. They’re smirking at me, pleased with their successful surprise.

“Their parents are in Japan on business for a while, so they’re here to study abroad. Be sure to give them a warm welcome,” says our teacher.

He’s really staring at me as he speaks. It’s almost like that last sentence was directed at me alone.

“I’m Elizabeth Ophelia Renfield. Nice to meet you all.”

“I’m Abigail Selina Lucraft! It’s very nice to meet you!”



"Shouldn't you be in my sister's class, Abby?" I ask her.

"The school tested her and said she'd be fine in this grade," says the teacher.

I suppose it's fine, then. The girls gather close to me on both sides.

"Let's have fun in class together, Tasha!" cries Abby.

"Heh heh heh! Aren't you glad we're here?" asks Eli.

"I should have figured it out, since you were both in the game."

Hmm...? What's that I'm catching glimpses of?

"Are Ms. Letty and Ms. Dory here too?" I ask.

"Huh? Oh, yeah... I've never seen any maids in real life before," the teacher remarks. "I guess those are their real-life jobs too!"

"It's distracting having them look in on us. Can't they come inside? We have extra chairs, and besides, it's their job to be close to their mistresses, so they'll know how to remain quiet. I'm sure they're concerned about them."

"Hmm...they're the ones who wanted to wait outside, but I guess I'll let them in."

Observations are already allowed in our classroom, so in that sense, it doesn't seem like it will be a problem...as long as you ignore the maid uniforms.

They slip into the classroom once the teacher calls for them and immediately blend in with the room.

"Okay, aside from these two, I don't have any updates for you. Have fun and don't get hurt."

Our teacher exits the classroom. Instantly, the students grow noisy.

Tomohiro and Suguru come over to us after a bit.

"Yo!" they say together.

"Good day," we greet them.

"There's a new official FLFO trailer out. It's from the camping event. There's a TV cut and a long version."

"That's a little late, isn't it?" I respond.

"It must be because the event was so long. Want to give it a watch, since we've got time?" asks Tomohiro.

"Yes!" Abby gave an enthusiastic response, so I agree to watch it too.

We start with the short version.

"Whoa, they start out with the climax?" remarks Suguru.

"Yeah, that's Triffid," Tomohiro adds.

They're right. The video starts with the last boss of the event. The point of view switches back and forth between the ground and aerial units, then we see the boss defeated, followed by the banquet, the game's logo, and then it ends... Wait, not quite.

The video looks so dark...

"What's happening?"

"Ah, couldn't this be that infuriating storm?" asks Eli.

"Oh yeah... The work of those demons..."

"Whoa! The skeleton!" cries Abby.

"Huh?"

"Foolish humans... I'll make you regret this day... Hyah hyah hyah!"

"Heh heh... That was Mr. Skelly's line, wasn't it? Ah, there he goes," I comment.

It's the scene where the storm dragon sent Mr. Skelly flying, only for him to crawl back on the ground.

"Oh, I see. You were in a party with those two guys during the event, right, Kotone? I guess that explains why you recognize it."

"I was recording a video at that point too. I should upload it when I get home, as long as it doesn't spoil the long version."

"Let's watch that one now."

That scene could be edited into something out of a horror film, but I only took the video as a joke...

The long version of the trailer is a condensed version of each day. The first day was rough. Watching it now is like watching a compilation of scavenging shipwreck victims. How awful. Fights break out suddenly and people just as suddenly topple over. It's like a scene out of Hell. Of course, the fourth day is the most interesting. Though the players in the video are in a desperate state, it's fun to watch it from an outsider's perspective. Yeah, that's awful too.

"I think I'll upload my video when I get home. The title will be 'The Truth Behind That Trailer'"

"I'm looking forward to it."

Class starts after this. At lunchtime, my sister shows up and freezes when she spots Eli, Abby, and the maids. They end up driving us home in their cars, making the commute a breeze.

All right, it's gaming time.

I upload my video on the usual site before logging in.

It's time to chat with the Pup Lord in my villa. He tends to give out beneficial information, so I'll be sure to pay close attention.

"How is your Space Recognition Expansion? Are you managing to get the hang of it?" he asks me.

"Get the hang of it? Isn't it a passive skill?"

“Hm...?”

He's staring at me like he has no idea what I'm talking about.

I believe Space Recognition Expansion is a skill that modifies Detect and Perception, while also adjusting things like drift calculations and spell radius predictions. Doesn't that make it a passive skill? I assumed it was leveling up on its own because the Silver Key was linking me to a 3D map in my brain.

“Um, do I have that wrong?”

“For now, turn off Space Recognition Expansion and remove your Silver Key.”

I do as he says and remove the Silver Key. It looks like the 3D map is still in my mind, although there was a big reduction in perception range...a little *too* big, in fact. Once I remove Space Recognition Expansion altogether, the map disappears from my brain.

“So this isn't one of the Silver Key's unique abilities?” I ask.

“The Silver Key is what strengthens it. Usually, it is only dependent on your skill level.”

“Now I know how wonderful my Silver Key truly is.”

“Of course. Just who do you think made it?”

The rarity was “GO” as I recall. It sounds like this was made by Stellura herself.

I re-equip both the key and skill.

“So, are you using it well?” the Lord of Tindalos asks me.

“Actually, not so much.”

“I see... What is the problem?”

“I just can't seem to process it all.”

“You must have been a human on the other side. So it is a simple issue of processing power? That is most unfortunate.”

"The trouble for me is the time lag that occurs when you switch inputs, although it *is* convenient to see things outside of my vision."

"Hmm? Are you still relying on your vision for information? How about I destroy those eyes for you?"

He's an outer one, all right. He reaches absolutely insane conclusions.

"Once you grow accustomed to Space Recognition Expansion, your eyes will be nothing more than outdated products," he informs me.

"Will I be able to gain more information that way?"

"Yes. In fact, if you are to become one of us, then now is the time to abandon your eyes. Most of us are without eyes."

I suppose he has a point. Now that I think about it, Mr. Alf's height goes up to where his head would be, but he mentioned how he can see behind him even without a head.

But I've never seen Space Recognition Expansion on the BBS before. Maybe slimes and golems see things differently, like Mr. Alf. After all, it's a rare skill that unlocked with only 16 SP, thanks to the Silver Key. I bet it's hard to unlock without that item.

"Hmph..."

"Letting go of the light will adjust your other abilities. After all, you possess the Silver Key."

"Huh? What do you mean?"

The Lord of Tindalos explains that there are plenty of ways for me to offset the loss of my eyes. In addition, there are resources for me to take over certain aspects, which will increase my effects more than the average person.

If I can't see, then I can acquire good ears like a rabbit to distinguish things, or I can develop echolocation like a bat. If I can't hear, then I can learn to read facial expressions and lips. There's also Telepathy, which allows me to connect with others through their minds. Those people are so specialized in reading others, it can actually become quite a nuisance.

Well, he never said it would be easy, but skills in this world function on a fantasy basis. You can choose whatever you want if you're willing to put in the hard work.

My case is a rather straightforward one. I obtain information from my eyes and brain via Space Recognition Expansion. If I struggle with this change in perception, then I just have to keep my eyes shut. I'll stop my hybrid functioning and leave all the processing to Space Recognition Expansion.

Regardless of whether there's some upgrade I can get for them, the problem is that my eyes are inferior. That's what the Pup Lord is trying to tell me. The hybrid method has its benefits too, but he wants me to get rid of my eyes completely. Since I haven't reached the point of detecting colors yet, I can open my eyes only when I want to know the color of something.

Yes, I suppose that *is* straightforward. Focusing on Space Recognition Expansion may make it easier to level the skill up, but I don't want to say goodbye to seeing the world until I get used to using my skill.

For now, I'll think about buying a blindfold or eye mask. That seems like something to talk to Mr. Dentelle about.

My biggest problem is overcoming the fear I feel when I close my eyes and use Space Recognition Expansion to see. It's really tricky. It won't do me any good unless I can move around with only a 3D map in my brain. I doubt there's all that many people who could do it.

I'll just have to keep testing things out until I get the hang of it. They say that humans are good at adapting, so I'll have to pray that I get to that point very quickly.

To be frank, since this is a video game, I would guess that some skills become more effective only when you're in a state of blindness. I don't know if the same goes for being in darkness, like you often see in games, but it's probably a good idea to find out. What else...? I don't know if it exists in this game, but there's also drunken boxing and such in real life.

The Pup Lord and I chat as I study languages, then go our separate ways at a good stopping point.

In my kitchen, I watch my magic tools go to work on some meat, then head over to my bread maker.

I open my inventory through the automatic bread machine's UI and add bread flour, all-purpose flour, cake flour, and whole wheat flour. Then I add salt, sugar, fresh yeast, instant yeast, and natural raisin yeast from my magical seasoning set. All I have to do next is select what to make from my recipes, input the quantity, and let the machine do its job.

The ingredients I've added will deplete when used. The machine also mixes by itself, uses time-skipping to complete fermentation, molds the bread and time-skips again, then presents a product that you simply bake on your own. I love this fully automated system.

The environment's mana concentration seems to matter here. To summarize, the machine appears to function based on how much energy it has in its surroundings to run off. There was a spot in the UI to add magic stones, but I need those for Alchemy, so I'll skip that step. Having to buy fuel for these appliances would make them far more expensive for most homeowners.

I also add ingredients to my smoker to have it make some jerky. These will definitely sell. In fact, they're the main staple of the entire Cooking skill.

I use Fast Reaction on my holy punica pickling in white liquor, which uses quite a bit of MP. Should I have used a Space spell on them instead? My key reduces MP consumption by half and my title is a further 5 percent reduction, so it's a lot easier to use spells now. I love how simple it's become to skip more time at once. However, the hefty MP use is the same as ever.

I also use the honey harvested from the military magic battle bees to brew some mead. Naturally, I use water of reminiscence as a base. I can just let it sit now, which makes the process simple.

Then I bake the bread that comes out of the bread machines, adjust my black tea and sausage recipes, and make sure everything is to my liking. There's no need to make everyone accept this as if it were a job in real life. In fact, people on the BBS seem to have a better time the more they adjust their environment to their own preferences. That way, players can find someone who cooks the way they like and discover their personal favorite chefs. There's even a secret adventurous side some people show

when they make the choice to buy food from a different person.

Barbecue sauce and yakiniku sauce came with our barbecue sets, so I'll avoid those, as I'm sure everyone else will be using them. Instead, I use herbs from the south that I got through Ms. Meghan's connections. The result is an herb mix to be used with steaks. My trial and error produced one combination that was unbelievably disgusting, but, well, accidents happen to the best of us.

Next up was the sausage recipe experiments. To be honest, it was harder to clean up the sausage accident compared to the herb mix accident. It had to do with the amount I produced with each try. I ended up giving them away to a certain visitor who showed up with perfect timing. I'm sure I must have looked dead in the eyes when I handed them to her. Rina probably suspected something had gone wrong and fed it to her party members instead. I should apologize to them later. Mr. Musasabi also gave his sausages away to others after he tried one himself. This whole thing must have resulted in many victims.

It's too bad, since I really love sausages with lemon and herbs. I worked really hard on those. For now, they're finally decent enough to eat, so I'll stop messing with them for a while. I can go back to them whenever I'm in the mood.

I also adjusted the brine solution that I use for salting jerky. I produced lots of small portions made with different herbs and can now smoke everything at once, even after soaking a few strips at a time. My current smoker doesn't have any option to change wood chips, so it's best to try to find an herb combination that suits the flavor of chips.

The sacrifices that come during the pursuit of delicious food are tragic. With perfumes, you can generally tell what's a good mix. But when scents don't mix, they just cause nausea. Lord, have mercy...!

Creating tea blends was easy, since I know about that in real life too. I suppose the one problem is that, with so few tea varieties, there are only a few blends you can make. I sure hope the saplings in my field grow quickly. I'm excited to taste them for the first time.

Anyway, I think it's time to sell my steaks with the herb mix, lemon herb sausages, and herb jerky on consignment. The baguettes can go in sets with soup, and hot dog buns will be sold along with hot dogs. Jerky can stay as it's always been.

I can use five element talismans anywhere so long as I make lots of magical energy paper in advance, so I worked on those in my spare moments too.

By the way, once I reached level 30 of Chef, I received Magical Select, which now allows me to select buffs on cooking. The buffs I choose appear to follow normal rules, but I appreciate the option to specify which buff I want for each dish.

I'd like to do some hunting too, but with the Book of Eibon, it's best to finish leveling up my language skills first. I do my language studying whenever I have a block of three hours or more. However, studying gets boring after a while, so I'll move hunting to my days off and level up Mythical Languages once I get home from school. It's much easier that way.

Then I'll craft before I go to bed, put my creations up for sale, and log out and say goodnight. Once I'm done with languages, I can go hunting or walk around towns to look for an event. Well, that's still a long way off.

It seems like it's a good idea to check libraries from time to time. My Instinct skill has started to quietly activate in them now. I suppose that means I've fulfilled some sort of requirement. It would be a real pain to read every book in the library, so I'm glad to have this method of browsing.

By fulfilling special requirements, an extra art has been added to Alchemist.

EX ENCHANTMENT:

Races that cannot eat can now consume food that has been converted to magical energy.

Food will now disperse if left out for too long. Aside from that, there are no other changes.

It looks like you need to get both Chef and Alchemist up to level 30 and then gain extra knowledge outside of that.

Now players like Mr. Skelly, Mr. Alf, and the twins can enjoy cooking buffs, despite never being able to eat before. Their stats were always high even without cooking buffs, so that's not the important part. The absolute best part of this is that now all races can enjoy delicious cooking without having to worry. I can't believe magical energy can convey flavors... Just what kind of material is it, exactly? I'm very curious about this.

Well, either way, I'll definitely use Enchant on my buffed meals next time. I'm not sure I'll use it for anything else, considering my work rate. People who cook at booths can simply Enchant food as requested, but I sell on consignment, after all.

I'd also like to upgrade my Alchemy circle. I just don't have enough time.

I should probably prioritize maxing out Mythical Languages. But if I use up all my weekday time with that, my combat skills are going to end up lacking. I'll have to be sure to use my EXP tickets from weekly login bonuses on combat skills.

Then there's the Book of Eibon. I'd like to decipher it sooner rather than later. It's an ancient grimoire that's said to be a compilation of dark legends and spells. It contains information, rituals, and spells related to Tsathoggua, Yog-Sothoth, Ubbo-Sathla, Azathoth, and more.

The Book of Eibon is full of information, summoning rituals, and banishing rituals involving these gods. It also contains many spells. Not even the Necronomicon has such a high concentration of forbidden knowledge within its pages. It's a reminder of just how powerful books can be.

Then again, everything I've just described is what I know from the source material. Stellura can be seen as a direct reference to Yog-Sothoth, but the same doesn't go for the others. This game's Book of Eibon might just be a generic grimoire that you see in fantasy settings. As a magic user, its modifiers are much appreciated, and it even helps me with Alchemy. Not that I know if it would do all that much for someone who isn't undead.

To conclude, I'll simply have to do everything little by little. I can make a more informed decision once information about the next event comes out. In fact, I feel like

it should be out by now... Oh, they posted it while I was eating dinner!

INTRODUCING THE THIRD OFFICIAL EVENT: "FANTASY SPORTS FESTIVAL."

We'll be putting on the most dangerous of sports festivals. Cut down your opponents or send arrows and spells flying their way.

This is no place for good sportsmanship. If you're not first, you're last.

History is written by the victors. Dead men tell no tales.

...Despite all that, it's still a festival, so please have fun.

They're supposedly holding a sports festival, since it's that time of year, but it really sounds like it will be a bloodbath. They should call it a sports massacre.

So all I need to do is sign up for the competitions I want to join before the start of the event?

It also says that we can form a party on the day of the event if we want to enter the festival as a team. But the developers recommend going solo as much as possible.

The time and date of the competition can be seen when registering for each one. You can, of course, spectate the games by selecting the competition of your choice from the UI. However, spectators only earn a participation prize, so they recommend picking at least one game to join.

TARGET SHOOTING:

Hit the targets with your bow or spells!

MAGICAL VOLLEYBALL:

Use your arts and spells to put on a splendid fight!

HUNTING CONTEST:

The enemy type drawn in a raffle will start to spawn! Kill them and bring back whatever they drop!

SCAVENGER HUNT:

Draw a raffle card and find a person who meets the criteria it says! Use your strength to reject any demands from opponents!

PANJAN ROLL:

Carry it to the goal without it exploding!

SOUL GATHERING:

Defeat the enemies inside the cage and collect more souls than your opponent!

Ground enemies +1, flying enemies: +2, players: +3, teammate: -2.

OBSTACLE RACE:

Escape the various traps to reach the goal!

TREASURE HUNT:

Find the material you randomly draw! Players who die are disqualified.

TUG-OF-WAR:

This is no normal rope. Compete by seeing who can reel in the biggest tuna within the time limit.

Players who die during these events are disqualified.

PVP EVENTS

FREE-FOR-ALL:

It's nothing but enemies all around you!

KILL CONFIRMED:

Tap your defeated enemies to confirm their death!

CONQUEST:

Seize the enemy's territory on a massive playing field!

BATTLE OF SALES:

Set up a stall in the event area.

All categories are voted on.

There's quite a lot... Hmm... There's a maximum of four competitions you can compete in, and you have to select ones that don't take place at the same time. I could participate with a stall, but I'd prefer to move about.

Panjan Roll... That must be a reference to England's freakish weapon, the Panjandrum, right? Unfortunately, the Panjan Roll and Obstacle Course are out of the question for me due to my stats. I can't compete in games with running.

Hunting Contest, Scavenger Hunt, Soul Gathering... If I want to do PvP, I should go for the Free-for-All. Free-for-All is solo, Kill Confirmed is a party battle, and Conquest is a team game.

Being a slow mover really puts me at a disadvantage. I'm not suited for Kill Confirmed or Conquest. I can probably use a mount for Conquest, but it's guaranteed to have flying enemies, which will be difficult for my wyvern. A horse is probably the best I can do. In conclusion, if I want to participate, Free-for-All is likely to be easiest for me.

All right. I'll apply for the Hunting Contest, Scavenger Hunt, Soul Gathering, and Free-for-All once they start taking entries.

The day of the event is the third Saturday in September? It will be the very first event for third-wavers.

I want to get Space Recognition Expansion up to a practical level before then. That should give me a good advantage in the Free-for-All. I've spent the past few days trying to go about my business with my eyes closed, and I've finally found a concrete reason for my fear. It's the difference in sight.

My eyes only let me see in a fan shape, however, Space Recognition Expansion expands that into a full sphere up to a certain radius. This difference makes things much harder than I first thought. With eyes, you can tell something is far away, even if you can't see what it is. Space Recognition Magic doesn't show anything outside its scope, but within the range, it shows what's behind, above, or underneath you. I need to level up Space Recognition Expansion to its maximum perception range, or else arrows and spells will come at me out of nowhere, even with the enemy right in front of me.

A daily use for Space Recognition Magic would be looking for someone. Even in a crowd, you can look at what's behind you. You just can't see anyone far away whatsoever. You can't even make out their clothes. If what you're searching for is outside of your range, you'll never even catch sight of it unless you move. Maybe it would fall into range if you took two steps to the right, but you'll never even know that much.

All of these problems originate from the overly small perception range that Space Recognition Magic grants at first. In other words, you're at a total loss if your skill level isn't high enough. I'd go as far as to say it's a garbage skill when it's too low.

Currently, I've managed to obtain a decent range. It's just starting to be at a usable range when I close my eyes now. Well, I still have time before the event, so I'm sure my perception range will expand a bit more by then.

My skill level is still too low to see colors. That means cooking comes with the risk of death if I don't use my eyes.

Honehone has arrived for a visit.

Oh, Mr. Skelly is here.

Honehone has arrived for a visit.

What the heck? I should see what's going on outside.

Wait...it's not actually coming from the statue.

Honehone has arrived for a visit.



...
Honehone has arrived for a visit.

...Ah. Now I get it.

"What are you playing at out here?"

"Howdy, Princess! Did it work?"

"You filled up my chat log."

"Oh, really?"

Entering my property gives me a notification, so by side-stepping across the border over and over again, he's able to fill up my game log. It's total abuse of my property.

"Think it'll work for a quick joke?" he asks.

"I think that's about all it will do." I feel like people will get mad at him if he keeps doing that. Then again, only undead who have passed their trials could be here in the Nether, so he wouldn't be able to annoy too many people.

"Anyway, Princess, wanna go to the fourth area on Saturday?"

"Which direction?"

"Dunno. What's a good one?"

"Now that I think of it, I've only unlocked the northeastern and eastern parts of the third area."

"We can't use potions, after all. I wanna level up too. Why don't we hit the east?"

"That works for me. What time should we leave?"

"How about after lunch?"

"Understood. Finfelden, right?"

"You know the name?"

"Ah, actually, why don't we go to the northeast? That part is closer to dungeons."

“Oh, sounds good! There’re dungeons there?”

“There’s supposedly one to the bottom right area of Valuwasse, which is in the northeast. It’s two blocks to the north of Finfelden. That information came from Ms. Sophie.”

“Huh. Then let’s go unlock the northeast! If there’s time, we can always hit up the east too. I wanna check out those dungeons.”

“Then we’ll meet in Fellforge after lunch, correct?”

“You got it! See ya then!”

I’d been wondering when this might happen. He finally invited me to explore the fourth area.

First, we’ll unlock the northeast, where there’s likely to be a dungeon. Unlocking the east would be a good idea to do while I’m in a party, but it’s not the sort of thing that has to be done immediately.

Since I can’t resist the urge to visit a dungeon, I’ve made that our first goal. We might have to turn around, depending on the strength of both the field and dungeon monsters, but if it comes to that, we can shift gears and go unlock the east instead.

“What’ve you been up to lately, Princess?” Mr. Skelly asks me.

“Studying languages has been taking up most of my time, so I’m not really going anywhere at all.”

“Not making progress?”

“It increases 5 percent every three hours of real time. If I use a full in-game day, I get 10 percent.”

“Six hours for 10 percent...?”

“I’m not sure I can max out my languages before the sports festival right now... I use the bit of time I have before bed to craft items, so at least my stats are going up.”

“Oh right, they put out event information. Did you decide what to sign up for?”

“I want to do the two scavenger hunts, Soul Gathering, and the Free-for-All.”

“Whoa, you’re gonna do PvP?”

“Well, it’s a free-for-all, so I didn’t see the harm... Actually, there’re quite a few other PvP games too, aren’t there?”

“Yeah, that’s true.”

I chat with Mr. Skelly for a bit longer before we part ways.

I head to the union before bedtime, put my items up for sale, and then log out.

OFFICIAL BBS 6

[It's almost] Chatting Thread 96 [October]

1. Resting Adventurer

This thread is for general chatting.

Please write whatever you want, but keep the rules in mind, or you'll have Management breathing down your neck. Seriously. The entire thread might be deleted. Please cut me some slack.

Past threads: http://*/***/

>> 940 Open a new thread, please

477. Resting Adventurer

But of course.

478. Resting Adventurer

Butt of course.

479. Resting Adventurer

Butts!

480. Management

I'll shove a sword up your butt and make your teeth chatter.

481. Resting Adventurer

A sword? That would be fatal.

482. Resting Adventurer

Teacher! Management said something bad!

483. Management

End of discussion.

484. Resting Adventurer

Hey now!

485 Management

I am the law.

486. Resting Adventurer

Lmao.

487. Resting Adventurer

By the way, Princess uploaded a video from the camping event.

488. Resting Adventurer

The one with Mr. Skelly, right? It made me laugh.

489. Resting Adventurer

It was like a comedy skit.

490. Resting Adventurer

How awful was that storm?

491. Resting Adventurer

Really awful, yeah...

492. Resting Adventurer

Now that I think of it, third-wavers never even experienced it.

493. Resting Adventurer

Yeah, the next event will be their first.

494. Resting Adventurer

I wonder what it's gonna be?

495. Resting Adventurer

Who knows... What would be something that fits the time of year?

496. Resting Adventurer

Halloween is in October, I guess... Isn't this the time for sports festivals and school festivals?

497. Resting Adventurer

Out of those two, I hope they go with the sports festival.

498. Resting Adventurer

Yeah, I dunno how they would do a school festival in a video game...

499. Resting Adventurer

It's a sports festival! The official announcement just came out!

500. Resting Adventurer

Hell yeah! I'm gonna go read it!

CHAPTER 11

SATURDAY: SEPTEMBER WEEK 2

I WAKE UP IN THE MORNING and go to recover my sales profits from the week. I sold jerky, hot dogs, onion gratin soup, five element talismans, and magic clay. I also sold my elemental metal to Mr. Ertz.

Subtracting the handling fees that come with selling on consignment, I've made 6.74 million gold in total. It's a wonderful profit, even if it came over a span of five days. It was easy enough to recover the money I spent on my crafting environment. Jerky and hot dogs have an excellent cost-to-profit ratio.

I feel like I've got a satisfactory crafting environment for now. I should probably request some accessories from Ms. Nephrite, and I also want to order some kind of blindfold equipment from Mr. Dentelle.

I log out for now and have breakfast.

I log back in while it's still morning.

Something hit me while I was eating breakfast—what happens in this game if you choose to have your character's eyes closed during character creation? I sit down on a bench in the town square and search the BBS.

It looks like there's an option that allows you to have your eyes closed by default. Then there's another option that lets you choose if you can still see like normal in that state or if you want to see nothing. It's recommended that players with closed or slit eyes play with sight, unless they want the extra challenge.

So it really does exist. Characters with slit or closed eyes are actually somewhat popular. But they wouldn't be able to play if they had no vision at all. That must be what the settings are for.

It's possible to open your eyes if you focus on it, so no matter which setting you choose,

the “blindness” status ailment still affects everyone. That seems to be what Management is getting at.

I won’t need a blindfold if I make use of this function. The one issue is that it will cost a bit of real-life money to access the character creator.

I don’t hate the idea of using a blindfold made for an accessory slot, since my stats will increase, but it seems a bit annoying. It will also mess with my character’s appearance.

“Oh? Hey there, Princess,” Mr. Dentelle greets me.

“Good morning. I wanted to ask you about something.”

“I don’t hear that from you very often. What’s up?”

“Can you make blindfolds or eye masks that go in accessory slots?”

“Uh... Yeah, that’s an option.”

“I really need a blindfold to help with one of my skills. I’m not sure if I should get one or if I should change my eyes in character creation. I’m at a bit of a loss.”

“Hmmm... What about a butterfly mask, like a phantom thief? I could probably make one of those if I tried, but the problem would be how to use it.”

“Does the game not allow you to wear it?” I ask.

“The function to keep a mask on your face exists, but if the item doesn’t have that function, it won’t stay up. That’s why right now, you can’t wear those floating items you see in other games that make you wonder how it’s staying up there. I know it’ll be possible at some point, but my skill levels are just too low. It must be an extra art or third-tier skill.”

“Hmm... I’ve been wanting to finally fill up my accessory slots too. I just want to cover my eyes. What kind of designs would look best?”

He stares up at me and pulls at my hand, urging me to spin around. I do a twirl.

“Let’s see... The simplest option would be the headband type, where you just cover your eyes and tie it behind you. But you’ll have to change your hairstyle if you do that.

I don't think it would suit your current outfit either."

Tying a blindfold behind my head would cover up the one part of my hair where I added braids. That isn't going to work.

"Hmm...would glasses give you the effect you want?" he asks me.

I take the glasses from him and fold fabric around the lenses, but it's not quite right.

"It does work, but it's not doing what I want."

"Okay. You might have to wear goggles. They don't look great though. I'd suggest wearing two eyepatches, but that would just be ridiculous."

Mr. Dentelle tests out lots of ideas on me, but it doesn't look like anything is working out the way I'd hoped.

"It seems like you're not thinking about how to take the blindfold off either. Are you sure that won't be trouble? If switching from vision to no vision is important, I feel like going through the character creator menu is the best option," he suggests.

"Ah... I think I'm going to go borrow Ms. Primura's firing range for a bit."

"Sounds good."

He's right. Taking off and putting on glasses would be a bit annoying, but having to tie a blindfold on my head would be even worse.

For now, I exit Mr. Dentelle's shop, enter Ms. Primura's nearby shop, and head to the firing range. This way, I can tell how far away things are. If a target enters my field of vision, I can use it as a reference for distance.

The results of my experiments end up telling me a lot.

First, the Silver Key gives a double range modifier that decreases to a 1.5 modifier when my eyes are closed. I can see the target at twenty-three meters away in my base state. That number is equal to the radius, since my vision is in the shape of a sphere. Doubled, that makes for a diameter of forty-six meters. Space Recognition Expansion also happens to be at level 23. When I equip the Silver Key, I can see the target at forty-six meters away from me. That's a diameter of ninety-two meters. When I close my

eyes, I can see sixty-nine meters away for a diameter of 138 meters.

From what I've seen on the BBS, short bows have a direct firing range of forty meters, while longbows and Japanese bows have ranges of fifty and sixty meters respectively. In other words, with this range of vision, I'll be able to spot archers targeting me with direct shots. The problem is that angled shots reach 120, 160, and 200 meters respectively, meaning the archer will be outside of my range. But, well, angled shots are actually relatively easy for me to handle, so I won't let that get to me.

More than angled shots, I'm concerned about mechanized bows—crossbows, in other words. They can shoot in a straight line up to one hundred meters. However, it sounds like they start to lose power, accuracy, and altitude after fifty meters. Crossbows can't use high-angle fire and the noise they make when fired is very loud, but they're supposedly great weapons at close range.

Spell ranges vary depending on the type used, but they generally reach as far as a longbow.

Either way, I'd like to get to a hundred-meter radius with this skill. Would it be dangerous to use accessories to get up to that point? It's a bad idea to have longbow and Japanese bow users be outside my range of vision unless I'm closing my eyes. If my skill level is equal to my vision radius, I need to get it up to level 30 before the tournament. At that point, the Silver Key will bring my radius up to sixty meters. At my ideal level of 33, I'll have a sixty-six-meter radius of sight with a 1.5 multiplier...

In other words, I'll need to switch back and forth between visions, so using equipment for that purpose wouldn't be optimal. I'll have to message Mr. Dentelle.

"I've tested my abilities and determined that I need to use the switching method."

"Is that right? Then I guess you don't need me for that. Come see me if I can help with anything else."

"I will. I'm going to head to Ms. Nephrite's shop now."

"See ya later."

I leave the firing range and head to Ms. Nephrite's shop next.

Her place sure is fancy... As a Handicrafting producer, Ms. Nephrite's store is, to put it

simply, a place where decorations are sold. I'm sure she'll accept gems, but in general, this isn't the sort of place that deals solely in gems. It's an accessory store, in terms of this game's equipment. She sells necklaces, earrings, rings, bracelets, and more.

It looks like Ms. Nephrite is working next to a staff member.

Oh, is that a teacup and saucer set? I *would* like some small items like that for my house... Using Tableware through Chef only produces containers with magical energy, and none of them have any special designs.

I like this pattern... I pick up the simple white item with blue lines painted across it and look it over. This craftsmanship is the real deal. It's not too expensive either. I think I'll buy it. Oh, and she has teacups made from magic clay here too, doesn't she? I look at their price tag, which bears a number wildly higher than the regular set.

"Oh, good morning, Princess," Ms. Nephrite greets me.

"Good morning, Ms. Nephrite. Are you finished with your work?" I ask her.

"I usually spend my time in the store preparing items, so I can take a break if I need one."

"I see. Is all this tableware made with Handicraft as well?"

"They're joint works. Someone else makes the basic shape, I add a design, and then they take it back to fire them in a kiln."

"Are some of these made with my magic clay?"

"I told you I bought some, right? I think I also mentioned how I wished you'd sell more."

"Magic clay isn't really a priority for me."

The price isn't *that* bad, but there aren't very many people who use it in the first place. In fact, I should really be making resurrection potions for that reason... But for now, I'll buy the items made with magic clay. It's 20,000 gold, I see. Ten thousand covers the price of clay, while the rest is her split of the profit.

"Thanks for your business!" says Ms. Nephrite.

"I actually came here to buy accessories," I inform her.

"Ah, so that's why you stopped by? Tell me what items, stat buffs, and gems you want."

"I think I'll start with a ring. I'd like Dexterity, Stamina, Intelligence, or Spirit buffs with Light or Dark gems."

"Uh-huh... How about this one?"

[EQUIPMENT-ARMOR] HEMATITE RING

Rarity: RA Quality: B+ Durability: 140

A ring with a large hematite gem that has been carefully cut.

Increases the Intelligence of the wearer.

Crafter: Nephrite

Appraisal Lv. 10

MDEF: Δ

Appraisal Lv. 20

Intelligence Increase: Medium

Dark Magic Spell Buff: Medium

Dark Magic Resistance: Medium

Blinding Resistance: Medium

Wow...it's so powerful. But when it comes to defense, my guardianship armor does a better job.

There are some rings without gems that don't have any magic buffs. Of course, these two types of rings are wildly different in price.

"How many do you want?" Ms. Nephrite asks me.

"I still have seven slots open."

"I didn't know you had that many. It's gonna get pretty expensive..."

"I've saved a lot of money up from my crafting, so that's not an issue. Two million will be enough to cover it, right?"

"Seven accessories would be about 1.8 million, I think. If you bring your own gems, I can lower that to 1.4 million."

1.4 million if I supply the gems? I don't mind selling some of them. It's not gems I'm lacking but magi iron.

I think I'll go with two rings for Dexterity, one for Stamina, two for Intelligence, and two for Spirit. Those will take four celestite and three hematite gems. My race gives buffs to Dark spells already, and I don't need any Dark resistance since my character absorbs Dark abilities. If anything, I should prioritize Light resistance now that my stat is at an even multiplier.

I part ways with four celestite and three hematite to purchase seven rings for 1.4 million. I quickly equip them, and what happens next is an extremely common occurrence in video games. It's time for me to switch the eye symbols next to each of my equipment slots to invisible. With each one, the ring disappears from my finger so it won't get in my way. This is an option to be used when an item is strong, but you don't care for how it looks or it doesn't match your equipment. The item will remain equipped and effective even when you can't see it anymore.

This function is also exclusive to accessories. You can't use it on weapons and shields, of course, nor can you use it on any portion of armor. That part is what the avatar slot is for.

I'm much stronger now that I've equipped items to all my formerly empty slots. My back and cloak slots are still open, but I think I can leave those two empty for now.

Ah, that's right. I was going to buy a bag for my worker.

"I'm going to head to Mr. Dentelle's shop now," I inform Ms. Nephrite.

"Thanks for your business. Those rings won't lose much durability, but be sure to bring them in for repairs before they break."

"I'll be careful of that."

After exiting Ms. Nephrite's stylish store, I return to Mr. Dentelle's shop.

"Back again, huh? What's up?" he asks me.

"I forgot that I wanted to buy a bag for my worker."

"Your worker... Ah, one of those things?"

Mr. Dentelle shows me to the storage section. There are backpacks, handbags, and pouches to wear around your waist. The backpacks store the most inventory, followed by handbags and then pouches. However, I've heard that handbags are trash in this game since you can't carry a weapon when it's equipped. The backpack seems like the safe choice.

"This one. I want this basket you wear on your back."

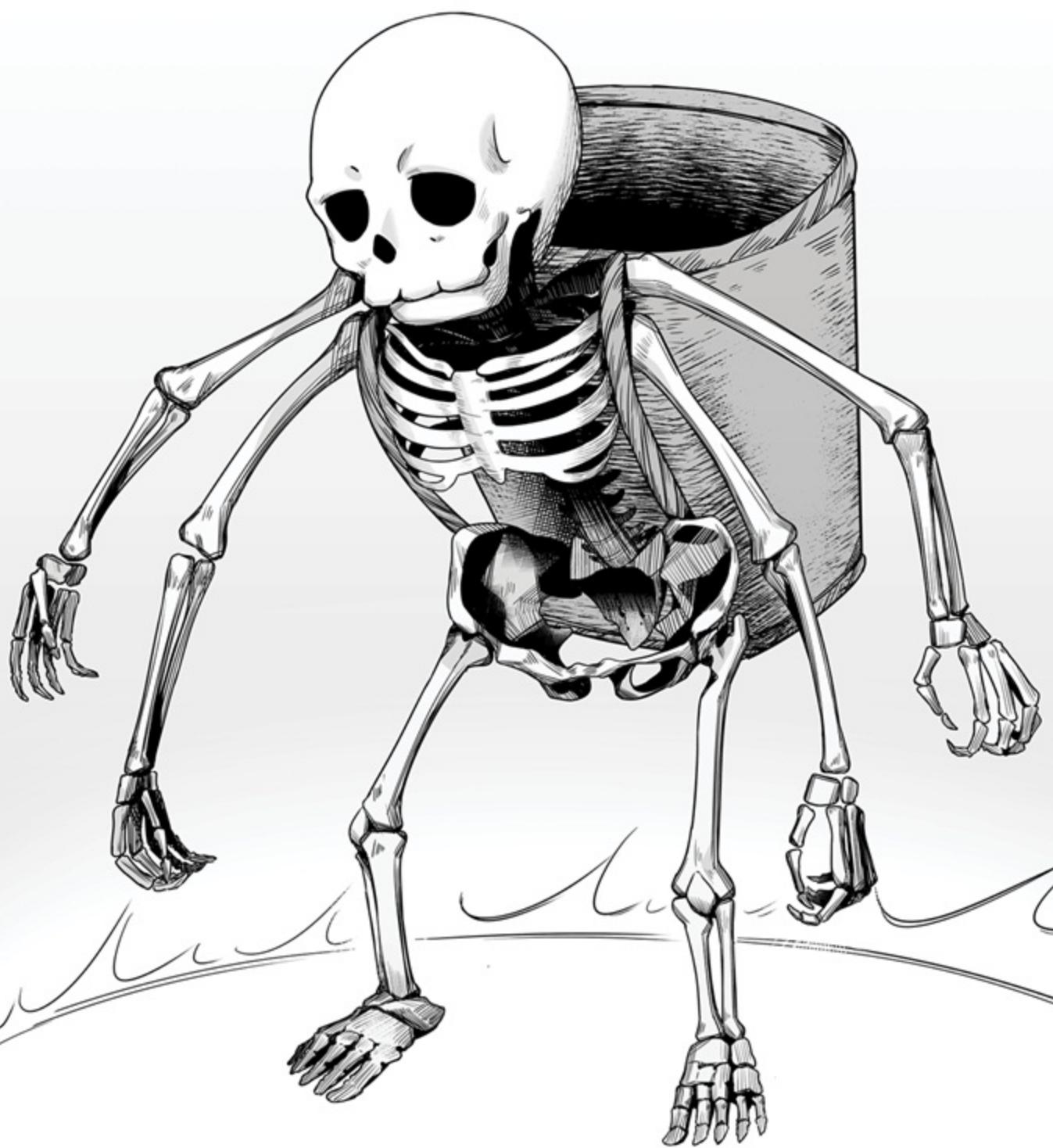
"You really had your eye on that one, huh?"

"It's a skeleton who's going to be wearing it, after all."

I purchase the basket with ten inventory slots for 30,000 gold, equip it to my worker, and summon him.

"It's kinda, I don't know...surreal," remarks Mr. Dentelle.

"Well, this will make it easier for me to receive his items, so I don't see an issue."



I stick my hand in the worker's basket, causing a menu to pop up with ten slots.

"Ah, it looks like I can use Inventory Control on this basket too," I say.

"That must be Space Magic, right?" he asks me.

"Huh? Hmm..."

"What's wrong?"

I try pressing the option to share inventory when it pops up.

Suddenly, the Silver Key at my waist floats up, pierces the empty portion of the walker's basket, turns as if it's unlocking something, and then warps back to my hip.

"What just happened...?" Mr. Dentelle asks.

"I see... It just made this basket into a shortcut to my own inventory."

"What? Space Magic stuff? Or is that because of the Silver Key?"

"I believe it's both. It's a link between Inventory Control and the Silver Key."

"Hmm...I guess that makes sense, since the key's an artifact."

The ten slots from the basket are added to my inventory, which is where anything the worker puts in his basket will end up automatically. What a wonderful upgrade.

I think if I equip it to other types of servants and share my inventory again, I'll get even more slots, but it's not like I have any urgent need for them at the moment. I don't even need Inventory Expansion at this point. I make use of Space Magic to provide it with constant EXP.

The reason my inventory used to fill up before was because of all my food ingredients. Now that I can store them away in my production kit, it's nothing for me to worry about anymore.

The basket doesn't bother me on a visual level either. I think I can leave it on my worker and be done with it.

"Do you have anything for a back and cloak slot? Mine are both empty," I inform Mr. Dentelle.

"Back and cloak... Your dress is the problem there. Most people go with backpacks in their back slot. Cloaks protect against cold, so I suggest wearing them in bad weather, but that doesn't apply to undead, does it?"

I shake my head. "My evolution made it so I don't take environmental damage."

"Then you're probably fine without either one. You could get a shawl or a stole if you really want one, I guess. I could even make one just for you, Princess... The update information also mentioned that they're gonna adjust the weather even more."

Now that he mentions it, I think they did say that the weather was going to start changing more frequently. It sounds like it will be more exciting that way, but that also means we'll have to take measures to handle the weather. I imagine Eli and Abby will probably have to deal with that.

I lost Ensol, didn't I...? I wonder if I can work something out with Space Magic. I'll just have to figure that out if the weather turns particularly bad.

I don't think I have anything else to purchase, so I leave Mr. Dentelle's shop for the day.

It's a bit early, but I think I'll eat lunch now and prepare for the rest of the afternoon.

When I log in after lunch, I select the character creator screen instead of the game world, set my default to closed eyes, and return to the world.

That worked. My field of vision has expanded, and it feels like it takes proper concentration to get my eyes open again. It won't be a problem, so long as I don't open my eyes in shock when something startles me. This feels good for now.

I wonder if it's most efficient to level up Space Recognition Expansion by walking around town like this and observing things. Wouldn't this function at its peak in a crowded area like Starting Town's town square? That means I'll also get a nice amount of EXP... Yeah, I think I'll spend my time here raising my skill level.

"What're you doing, Sis?"

“Your sister is currently leveling up a skill.”

“Out here?”

“Yes, since I thought it would be most efficient. I want to level up before the sports festival.”

“Is this related to perception?”

“It’s a rare skill I decided I needed to take, so I’ve closed my eyes to let it function at maximum strength.”

It does relate to perception, in a way. This point of view is like the ultimate way of using my Perception and Detect skills. The Force—err, the *mana* is with me.

Most points of view are the same as what humans take in with their eyes, but I think I remember snake races having the ability to perceive heat as well. Perhaps Space Recognition Expansion is closer to the mind’s eye than anything else.

Well, it’s a rare skill, so that part is a secret.

“Are you gonna have lunch, Sis?”

“I already ate. Mr. Skelly, Mr. Alf, and I are going to try to reach the fourth area this afternoon.”

“Where at?”

“Fellforge.”

“The northeast, huh?”

I see that Mr. Alf is already there. Mr. Skelly doesn’t seem to have joined him yet. Since I still have time, I’ll try to level up my skill a bit more. My sister logs out to eat lunch.

After some time, Space Recognition Expansion levels up. Just as I theorized at Ms. Primura’s shop, it seems safe to assume that the radius of my vision is calculated based on skill level.

I use the Silver Key to teleport to the Fellforge town square. Mr. Alf is right in front of

me when I arrive.

"Oh, hey, Princess," he greets me.

"Hello, Mr. Alf."

Mr. Alf invites Mr. Skelly and the three of us group up.

"Hey everyone!" Mr. Skelly says.

"Let's get going," Mr. Alf instructs.

Mr. Skelly and I summon horses instead of wyverns, since Mr. Alf is on horseback.

We can reach the fourth area by traveling up and to the right in a diagonal line out of Fellforge. The north and east of the town are mountainous regions, so we have to travel through the areas of lower elevation that function as roads. Undead horses are particularly great. They have no concept of stamina, meaning they can maintain their top speed—their gallop—indefinitely.

However, in this part of the map, we're running into golems. They're also pursuing us at a constant, maximum speed.

"The golem riders just keep coming," Mr. Alf remarks.

"They sure do..." I comment.

"They're slow, so we can pass 'em. Let's take out anything that's in front of us," Mr. Skelly suggests.

The "iron golem rider" is basically a golem riding on another golem. The one on the bottom looks like a dog, and the one riding it resembles a person. It feels a little unfair to the one on the bottom...

"Couldn't they have just made a centaur golem?" I ask.

"That one looks weaker than a centaur version. Maybe they did it on purpose?"

"That's true. It's possible that they wanted it to have a specific weakness."

There are other enemies such as gargoyles and iron wolves around us too, but none of them seem like they can keep up with our horses.

The iron wolves would usually present a bit of a challenge. They're silver-colored wolves with solid fur like iron. They're fast, being animals and all, but they also have stamina. Golems are heavy, slow, and have no stamina.

There aren't any real obstacles in our way. I think we'll be able to make it to the fourth area.

"Heh heh heh... Ee hee hee hee... Ha ha ha ha! I'm the fastest of them all!" cries Mr. Skelly.

"We're going at the same speed," Mr. Alf retorts.

"Heh heh heh... Ee hee hee hee... Ha ha ha! We're the fastest of them all!"

"What's the point in saying it twice?!"

That sure was a trio of unique laughs. Aren't those called the three stages of laughter? I thought they were usually used by villains, although he does fit the part visually. He's a lich, after all.

"Oh, we're almost at the fourth area!" he cries.

"There's still no real information about the enemies here. All I know is that iron enemies spawn in this area, but we'll gradually start to see steel equivalents," Mr. Alf explains.

"From iron to steel? As long as they don't speed up, we should be able to pass by them," I comment.

We spend some time scaling and subsequently descending the treacherous mountain paths. Once we enter the fourth area, I briefly activate my mental 3D map to scan for enemies. Mr. Alf is right—they're now steel around here.

I honestly can't visualize any colors or material quality, but skills like Identify that only require you to look at something still work. I can learn the enemies' names and shapes, and from there, I can generally guess their color and material. I don't know if this game has any sort of mystic eye skills, but I'm a bit curious to find out.

The enemies range from level 42 to 45. I've seen murder gargoyles, steel golem riders, and steel golem wolves.

The murder gargoyles are the only ones I can't quite figure out, so I use my eyes to look at them. They hold single-edged, one-handed swords that are bent back slightly. They look like oversized butcher's knives. The word "murder" really fits the bill. I can just sense how eager they are to take a life. Their bodies are like enlarged goblins made from stone with wings on their backs.

In other words...

"Gargoyles really don't look impressive at all," I state.

"Right? They're so realistic... It's like the devs didn't use their imagination," Mr. Skelly replies.

"Yeah. Where's the fun in that design?" Mr. Alf asks.

Their looks just don't bring any excitement at all.

Steel golem wolves are just steel golems with a wolf body. No longer are they organic life-forms.

"I remember a guy who came out here saying he suddenly died out of nowhere. I don't know what caused it, so be careful," Mr. Alf warns us.

"Kay!"

"Understood."

We run down the ever-unpleasant mountain path, when suddenly, I spot an enemy in the sky using my 3D mental map. Danger Sense activates next. The 3D map shows the enemy's planned path and everything. My normal vision only supplies the information from my eyes, of course, so this really puts me at an advantage. In other words, Danger Sense can't see when my vision only grazes across something in the sky above me, but that's what Instinct is for. The two skills cover for each other and are quite convenient to have if you've decided to take both of them.

Something suddenly shoots down at us from above. It's really fast... It looks like the enemy is a sky golem. I make sure my orders are quick and simple.

“Above us! Spread out!”

“Huh?!”

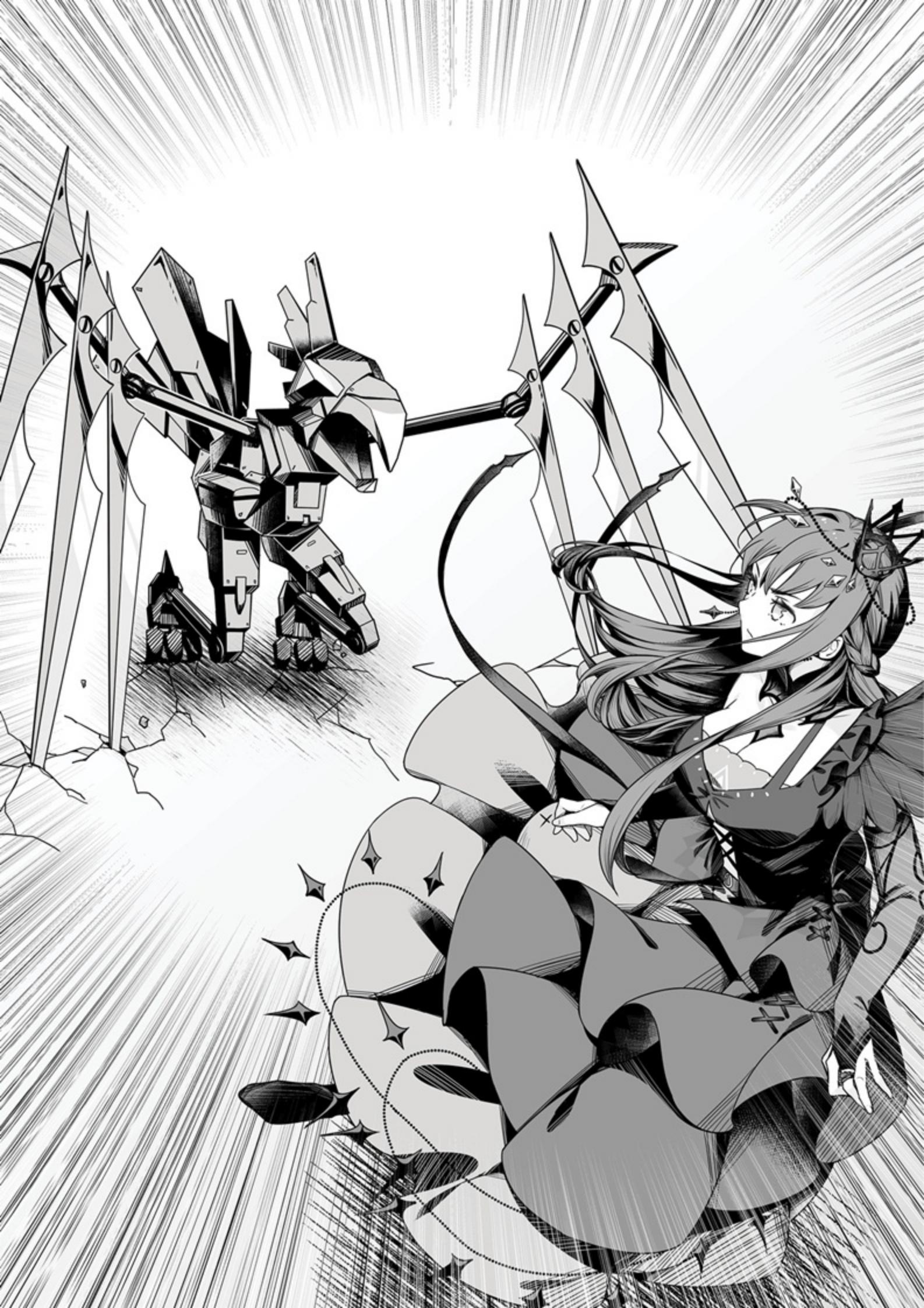
“Huh?!”

Danger Sense activates when I’m being targeted or when I’m within range of an AoE attack. Instinct is when it relates to other people or my party members. Instinct’s specialty is to strengthen or expand other skills.

Now that I’ve “noticed” the incoming attack, my two party members should be able to see the same line targeting us that I do. Mr. Alf and Mr. Skelly spread out in opposite directions, undoing the triangle formation I’d been leading us in. I, on the other hand, skid to a stop. I was already traveling at top speed the entire time. I know I won’t be able to outrun the golem now.

Us slowing down means that the sky goblin’s timing is ruined. It explodes into the ground in a crash landing. Dirt and dust goes scattering everywhere. Since I can’t see, I open up my mental 3D map to get a look as I remain on guard. But it’s really not moving, is it? I shoot a lance spell at it and find that it actually connects.

“They must freeze up after their surprise attack...” I conclude.



"It's not moving?" Mr. Alf asks me.

"No, it's not..."

"Nox Plode!"

Mr. Skelly's explosion lands and blows away the dust.

It looks like the sky golem's feet and wings are stuck in the dirt. It's now trying to yank its wings out to take off flying again. Not that I'm going to let that happen, of course.

"Ah, it's moving again. So it stays frozen for about six seconds? That's rather long," I say.

"Whooooaa! Sky golems are so cool!"

Mr. Skelly continues to fire spells at the monster while he compliments it.

It flaps its wings and manages to extract its feet from the ground. As it starts to rise in the air, Mr. Alf swings his two-handed sword and beats the golem back down.

"Take that!"

Mr. Skelly and I then fire our spells at it, putting the sky golem down for good.

I absorb its body before we continue forward.

The sky golem was probably a steel enemy, based on its color. Its body is about the size of a child, with its one unique trait being those wings that each contain three swords sticking out of them. The monster's overall silhouette is slender but with many sharp appendages and feet like those of a hawk.

It probably utilizes surprise attacks from above, using its feet, wing swords, heavy steel body, and drop speed to pierce right through its target.

"I wonder if that poster on the BBS died instantly from one of those dive bomb attacks..." Mr. Alf speculates aloud.

"I believe so. It has unique movements and attacks between its feet and wing swords."

"I probably would've died if that thing came after me," Mr. Skelly shares.

"I don't think I could survive it either at my level. It's probably really hard to block that angle of attack," Mr. Alf ponders.

"I'm not sure if the way it made the ground explode was just part of its attack animation or if it really has that much power," I say.

The sky golem was probably supposed to be a scouting enemy, yet it's powerful enough to instantly kill players who make it here. Yes, Mr. Skelly would definitely have perished.

"They look really cool. I want its summoning materials too," Mr. Skelly says to us.

"I'm sure they'll show up again if we keep going like this," replies Mr. Alf.

"Yes, most likely."

"I dunno if I'll actually use them, though!"

True... It wasn't like an interesting design always indicated a strong enemy.

Even if we could summon them as servants and get them to do the same attacks, our servants don't use metal, so I doubt the attacks will be as powerful without all that weight behind them. You can only select certain bodies for living armor as well.

I spot another one. This calls for a clichéd line. "They're raining down on us!"

I pull to a stop again and watch the sky golem hit the ground in front of me. Then I use Overspell and Hexa Spell to fire spells at the enemy.

Mr. Skelly uses Nox Explosion to blow the dust away and switches to single-target spells.

Once Mr. Alf sees that Mr. Skelly has cleared the dust, he rides up to the golem on his horse and brings his two-handed sword slamming down as hard as he can—using an art, of course.

It's helpful that we know the golem freezes for a few seconds after it hits the ground. We have no choice but to use that time to beat it up as hard as we can. We cut it down

before it can take off flying again.

Mr. Skelly absorbs the defeated sky golem, and we return to the road.

Steel tortoises, steel golems, and sky golems are in the area surrounding the town.

Steel tortoises are the size of a human child with shells made of hard metal. I wonder if they drop iron ore? Well, it would probably be better to go after iron tortoises for that...

Steel golems are masses of metal roughly three meters tall. The joints of the golems aren't attached—they're strange creatures whose body parts all seem to move independently. However, all magic creatures themselves are just as strange, really. That includes us undead. This is a fantasy world, after all.

We continue toward the town, slaying the sky golems that occasionally attack us.

"Hmm... Hitting a golem with a sword feels wrong..." Mr. Alf murmurs.

"Is it wearing down your weapon faster?" I ask him.

"I feel this weird pressure on me, since my sword will break if I swing it wrong. It's still a two-handed sword though, so its durability is on the higher side."

"I'm gonna laugh if your sword breaks!" Mr. Skelly responds.

"Ha ha ha ha! You shouldn't have said that to me."

Mr. Skelly only uses magic, so he has no say in this conversation. I can also just make a new blade if I lose one, so it's not a problem for me either.

Weapons for my servants would have been a separate issue if I hadn't been lucky enough to solve their equipment problem. Now they can all use maces. I'm sure they'll get by with those... I wonder if Mr. Skelly has learned that art?

"By the way, Mr. Skelly. Have you been to the library room?" I ask.

"Nope, why?"

"Oh, so you don't have these arts."

“Hmm?”

“When you read *Investigation Regarding Secret Art of Necromancy and Dream Caskets*, you get the arts Dream Casket, Ephemeral Doll, and Ephemeral Brilliance for Secret Art of Necromancy. You also learn to summon spirit bodies.”

“You whaaat?!”

“Why’d we have to get such a helpless lich?” Mr. Alf asks.

“Bleh!” Mr. Skelly sticks his tongue out at him.

“Knock it off!”

Libraries are very important in this game. Knowledge is the most valuable weapon. Of course, that’s assuming you have a brain that can make use of that knowledge.

Either way, we should set some time aside for Mr. Skelly to read once we arrive in Valuwasse. Ephemeral Doll doesn’t seem to be of much use yet, but the equipment part of those arts is extremely helpful.

I see the gates up ahead. “Huh. It’s very rugged,” I remark.

“Sure is, huh? Maybe they need the extra protection,” Mr. Alf says.

“Not only do they have tortoises, but they’ve got steel golems and sky golems to worry about,” adds Mr. Skelly.

I suppose a wall around the perimeter would be necessary to safeguard them from enemies.

“Huh? Are those ballistae?” asks Mr. Alf.

“Probably, unless they’re something unique to the city,” I reply.

“Golems are big targets, so I guess they’d be easy to take out. I doubt they ever hit any sky golems, though...”

“Couldn’t they just shoot at them once they’ve landed on the ground?”

“Maybe, if they’ve got a good line of sight. Are ballistae even that accurate?”

“I could see them being decent with skill modifiers.”

“We just don’t have any information.”

“Indeed. Speak of the devil...”

Another sky golem swoops down at us right in front of the gates. We take it out and make our way into town as if nothing even happened.

“Good day. We’re undead outsiders. May we enter?” I ask the guards.

“You must know what you’re doing if you made it here. We welcome you to Valuwasse. Head straight this way and you’ll find the main production environment.”

“I understand,” I say to the residents.

They don’t show the slightest disturbance over the sky golem’s attack. They’re locals, all right. This is everyday life for them.

We proceed down the main street as instructed and arrive at the town square. The first thing we do is unlock the portal, of course. Now we’ll be able to teleport here in the future. Then we say goodbye to Mr. Skelly. Mr. Alf and I use the time to rest.

“There are a lot more dwarf residents here,” I remark.

“They say this is a country of dwarves. I wonder if every building here is made of stone.”

“It must be to prevent fires. It’s also probably easy for them to acquire.”

“Yeah, like the rocks you get when you’re mining for ores.”

“But I’d assumed there would be smoke rising all over the city due to the number of workshops.”

“Same here. There isn’t even much smoke coming out of the houses, and it would normally be darker too.”

"Perhaps there aren't as many impurities in the fuel. My first thought is that they must use magic-powered fireplaces."

"Could be. It's kind of a fantasy trope. It's like, if magical energy is their main fuel source, then there's no soot?"

"It might be best to look at it differently. It's better for the environment as long as it's not carbon fuel."

"I doubt it's all magical energy. There's gotta be something more to it."

"Well, smithing isn't my specialty, so I'm sure Mr. Ertz and his crew will look into it."

The town built out of stone makes me feel like I've stepped into the Middle Ages. Although, this is a fantasy world setting, so the entire thing is sort of based on that time period. As long as it's somewhat similar, then it gets a pass. Players would definitely be mad if they accurately recreated the uncleanliness of the Middle Ages. I doubt I would have any interest in such a game either. On the other hand, a world with magic is unlikely to get so dirty in the first place. Spells like Laundry exist to create water and make life easier. That probably eliminates the potential for such a world of filth.

In fact, it almost feels unnatural for a world with something as incredible as magic to have developed so similarly to our world without it. Differences between the two worlds are perfectly natural.

Mr. Skelly walks up to us. "So sorry, pals! Were you sad while I was gone?"

"Shut up. Don't talk like that when you look the way you do," Mr. Alf barks at Mr. Skelly. He's a walking skeleton, after all.

"What should we do now?" I ask.

"Head to the fourth area dungeon in the east?" Mr. Skelly suggests.

"We could also gather information about it at the union," Mr. Alf replies.

"Right. They might have hunting or gathering quests for us. I'd also like to know what level the enemies are at," I add.

“So, union first?”

“That sounds good.”

“Let’s do it!”

OFFICIAL BBS 7

[Environmental destruction] Comprehensive Production Chat Thread 88 [The work of humans]

1. Nameless Crafter

This is a thread to discuss production.

Please talk about production here.

Also check the boards for each skill.

Previous thread: http://*****

Smithing: http://*****

Carpentry: http://*****

Needlework: http://*****

...etc.

>>940 Next thread's in your hands!

253. Nameless Crafter

Dear Mom. How have you been? Your miso soup is so delicious.

254. Nameless Crafter

O-oh. I see...

255. Nameless Crafter

Can I get mine with pork broth?

256. Nameless Crafter

Pork broth, huh? We could make that by using piggs.

257. Nameless Crafter

Plus, they're fun to hunt.

258. Nameless Crafter

You'll also find pigg monks.

259. Nameless Crafter

Those are the scary ones...

260. Nameless Crafter

Just add the name "monk" to a pigg, and they get so much harder to hunt...

261. Nameless Crafter

Better *pig* your fights carefully!

262. Nameless Crafter

Everyone shun that guy.

263. Nameless Crafter

We can't grow mint either.

264. Nameless Crafter

More importantly, elemental weapons are starting to appear on the market.

265. Nameless Crafter

I've seen a few here and there, yeah.

266. Nameless Crafter

Me too. Not that I know how to craft any yet...

267. Nameless Crafter

Old man, can't you just tell us already?

268. Ertz

The hell did you say? There's still almost no way to get the materials... But that's all I'm tellin'.

269. Nameless Crafter

I see... You really must need a magic furnace, huh?

270. Ertz

Something that works with magic items is a necessity.

271. Nameless Crafter

I figured. They're so expensive...

272. Nameless Crafter

And you have to make the initial investment in a production environment too...

273. Nameless Crafter

Huh? I was doing my daily check-in of Princess's consignment goods and saw something strange...

274. Nameless Crafter

That's your daily routine? ...Hey, what's this?

275. Nameless Crafter

Her food has been enchanted so that all races can eat it. Some of it's still normal, though.

276. Nameless Crafter

Hmm... So now races can eat even if they never could before?

277. Nameless Crafter

Exactly. But the downside is that it gets wiped if you leave it out, apparently.

278. Nameless Crafter

Enchanted, huh? I see... So turning it to magical energy allows them to eat it, but it eventually disperses?

279. Nameless Crafter

That's probably right.

280. Nameless Crafter

I haven't seen any art like that added to my cooking skills!

281. Nameless Crafter

Maybe you have to get to second tier, level 30?

282. Nameless Crafter

I've passed level 30, and I don't have it! Maybe it's an extra art you only get with special conditions...?

283. Nameless Crafter

One possibility: Alchemist.

284. Nameless Crafter

Th-that's possible...

285. Nameless Crafter

Knowing Princess...

286. Nameless Crafter

I haven't leveled up Alchemy at allllllll.

287. Nameless Crafter

I never even took it in the first place...

288. Nameless Crafter

That damn Alchemy turns out to be important. I'll have to start thinking about whether or not I should take it.

289. Nameless Crafter

This.

290. Nameless Crafter

Judging by the princess, it's probably gonna be very valuable for intermediate material production...

291. Nameless Crafter

The problem is that it's really hard to balance Alchemy with other things, considering the stats it demands of you.

292. Nameless Crafter

That's the main issue.

293. Nameless Crafter

Could you open a materials store if you level up Alchemy?

294. Nameless Crafter

Seems like there'd be some demand there.

295. Nameless Crafter

"Some" demand? There would be a lot.

296. Nameless Crafter

But that's assuming you can sell items that are high quality. If so, then you might have a chance.

297. Nameless Crafter

Be careful, because you need magic stuff if you want to use Alchemy.

BONUS STORY

THE SOLDIERS OF THE NETHER

ONE SIDE OF THE Evernight Castle is occupied by the Nether army under Svetlana's control.

Being undead, none of them need to participate in pointless training runs. Nor do they need to prepare for battles. For this reason, they've simply split into groups—or, more accurately, "squadrons"—and they appear to all train separately.

Whether they're trying to pierce a foe's body with a spear or sever an arm with their sword, these soldiers all remain very nonchalant. Perhaps they understand their own bodies so well because of how long they've lived.

"Are you here to learn about the army, Your Highness?" asks an undead.

"Yes, I am. Are you a soldier?" I reply.

"Indeed, although I'm still a novice."

He's probably been a "novice" for dozens of years, though. I know all about that. He won't deceive me.

"Are the troops always like this?"

"Ah...I think they're very reserved because the general commander isn't around."

He smiles awkwardly as he speaks. The soldier before me is a handsome spirit-bodied human with dark brown hair and blue eyes. He stands roughly 180 centimeters tall and is dressed in what appears to be a knight's uniform.

Though there are many people described as "spirit bodies," that includes people like spirit-bodied elves and dwarves. Seeing machinery races with spirit bodies feels a bit odd, but perhaps that's their own means of asserting their individuality. Although, to be a little meta, they're still just NPCs... But I won't think about that.

"But they're so good at combat because we have real, genuine heroes here," the soldier says.

"Real heroes?"

"Not made-up heroes like myself."

"Made-up heroes... Ah, you mean politically?"

"Exactly."

In other words, he was forced into the role.

"But fear not. I may not be much, but I am still a nobleman. I am prepared to do whatever it takes for the good of the country."

Oh, did he realize he had a sour look on his face? If he agreed to be put in his role, then I suppose I have no right to comment. Nevertheless, I *did* see that sour face.

"No, I had no complaints to speak of while I was alive! In fact, I was able to be of service both to the royal family and my own. I even married a lovely woman. I simply don't want to be lumped together with the general commander and the others."

"I've heard that Lana is the great hero of the Dinait Empire, but the people here are heroes too?" I ask.

"Yes, they are. To be more precise, among them are adventurers of the highest ranking, but they're all at a similar level of skill."

I see. So Lana really isn't the only hero. Also, if they're the highest rank of adventurers, I can probably assume they're as strong as someone like Ms. Sophie. Since a lot of time has probably passed since they came here as well, I'm sure they're even stronger than they were above ground.

"That pair over there are a former magisa and a former saint," the soldier points out.

Two women wearing robes are speaking to each other near a few soldiers having a practice fight. They appear to be an elf and a human, but I can't tell if they're spirit bodies or zombies.

"There's a saint in the army?"

"There sure is. She says that the Nether army will never invade another land. And that since we're the ones who protect the peace of the undead, calling us an army is rather rash, actually. She says we should be called protectors of the peace," recounts the soldier.

"True. I suppose it depends on how you look at things," I reply.

"She's very eloquent, being a saint and all. I decided not to challenge her on that, since we're allies."

A "saint" in the living world brings both the good and the bad, so I see why they would naturally be smooth talkers. This soldier appears to have been a nobleman while he was alive, so it seems like he would be good at playing the role of the hero that was made up for him.

"By the way, does the prime minister issue you any warnings or things to be wary of?" he asks me.

"No, I don't believe I've heard anything like that from him," I respond.

"Really? I don't know if he's forgotten or he's doing it on purpose..."

"Well, I'm typically up on the surface," I respond. "Lana and the prime minister always tell me to grow stronger before anything else."

"I see... Then I'll be the one to tell you what I can."

He looks out at the other soldiers, who are having practice battles and talking amongst themselves. I follow his gaze.

"As you can see, there are many races here," he tells me. "But while they were alive, not all of them were devoted to Stellura."

Wait... I feel like the vice-captain said something about all of them being Stellura's followers. Am I misremembering?

"However, we do share a point in common. Most who spend their lives heavily involved with the gods become undead themselves. More specifically, they perhaps receive

divine protection from one god or another, or are devotees of one of the gods.”

“So there’s no requirement that they worship Stellura exclusively?”

“It seems that requirement doesn’t exist in the beginning, at the very least. Those people over there and our supreme commander are proof of that.”

The hero currently fighting their heart out in a practice battle was a devotee of Sigdrifa while they were alive, while the former saint was a devotee of Haventhys. Lana, naturally, followed Sigdrifa in life.

“The timing is different for everyone, but they all eventually receive an offer from Stellura asking if they wish to become undead. That former saint worshipped Haventhys, but these days she says, ‘This world is the only place where we can assist the gods even after death. The outer ones are a special case, after all.’”

I know *I* would certainly want to become an outer one if it’s possible. The Ultimate Gate... I’m truly looking forward to it.

“Can’t you simply refuse if you don’t want to become undead?” I ask.

“Sure. It can also be nice to relax as a soul until the time comes to move on.”

He explains that existing in the afterlife as an undead for a long period of time will ensure you naturally become a devotee of Stellura. By that point, one of the pillars will have reached out to you for a deal and taken you into their service. It’s hard to just ignore her after that, I’m sure. Stellura is known as the god who delivers the most divine oracles, though she’s also famous as the guardian of monsters.

“You never know what your destiny might be. I was devoted to Stellura, and I was so happy to hear her voice after I died. Then before I knew it, I ended up here. I was just going with the flow the whole time. Not that I regret it now,” says the soldier.

“It sounds like she’s not too strict.”

“Well, I don’t know how it goes for other people.”

Could it be that all residents have their own personal insights on things? I assume it only happens to residents who have some sort of role... This man also seems to have a rather detailed backstory, seeing as how he complains about being a made-up hero.

"Your Highness, there's something I want to warn you of in advance... You should be very careful if you ever intend to dispatch us somewhere."

Oh dear. The mood suddenly got rather serious.

"I'm not planning on doing that. I'm careful not to disobey Stellura's will."

"That goes without saying. How do I put this...? I'd say it matters how you treat people who have something they'll protect above all else."

"Something they'll protect?"

"That something is different to each person. To a knight, it might be someone in the royal family, and to a civilian, it might be someone in their family. It's something that they'll never let anyone take. When a person has that in their life, or they have a strong order of priorities, they become even more powerful."

This man—no, *all* undead greatly value the afterlife that Stellura put them in charge of. It's the reason they exist and the one thing they'll protect above all else. Stellura is my master as well, so I could probably also call her the one thing I need to protect above all else. I live to serve her, of course.

"If there was a problem in the Abyss that required you to deploy us, then that would be fine. The problem would be deploying us to the world of the living. That's a place that no longer has value to us. Therefore, we could wipe it out without hesitation."

It's true that we live in separate dimensions. But lashing out at the other side would only become a pain for us. Killing people means their souls come to our realm, so it simply creates more work for us in the end.

"If you're capable of going to the living world, then it must mean you already have certain information in advance. You'll probably receive orders from Stellura as well. If she desires a certain outcome, be sure to command us with absolute precision. You understand, don't you? Once you dispatch us there, the state of the living world will depend entirely on how far you decide to go."

This game—no, this race of mine is really difficult! This is the price I pay for all my power!

I only hope that, if such a quest comes up, I'm at least given some sort of hint or clue.

Without that, it seems much too difficult to manage.

"Why hello there, madam. Are you here to learn about the army?"

"Hello, Martinez. I was watching them fight as I chatted with this man."

"Care to try it yourself while you're here?"

"Me? I already practice swordfighting with Lana... But very well. I'll do it."

I wonder if this will raise my affinity with any of them.

AFTERWORD

GOOD DAY! I'm Akisuzu Nenohi.

We're now at Volume 6. Even though this is an interim part of the story, we meet new characters, Eli and Abby finally get their dresses, and a lot of changes happen. Witches and dresses are common in fantasy stories, and now that Eli and Abby are all dressed up, Letty and Dory get their maid uniforms as well.

By the way, this story uses the terms "maid" and "lady-in-waiting" slightly differently. Or to put it another way, they're separate terms in real life and the game. The protagonist would call them maids in real life, not ladies-in-waiting. They're maids. They wouldn't be seen any other way unless they're cosplaying or something.

But that's not how it is in the game. The game world takes place under a monarchy. It has royalty and nobles, and what do the women of those families need? Maids. Maids are servants. But even as servants, there are different varieties and ranks among them, and they still need some sort of manager. That's where butlers come in. Butlers are simply butlers and wouldn't be called servants. They're men, and the job of "butler" is a position in its own right.

As for maids, they are simply the majority of servants who don't fall into other categories. There are also ladies-in-waiting, who aren't referred to as maids. They are chosen by their master to attend to his wife or daughters.

If a butler is the employee who stands behind the head of the family, then the lady-in-waiting stands behind his wife or daughters. They go out in public too, making them different from the servants who stay at home and clean. If a personal attendant is unskilled, it doesn't just affect the wife or daughter but reflects poorly on the family itself. A family's reputation is harmed if they're perceived as educating their servants poorly, making this a fatal flaw for nobility. There's no need to force a terrible lady-in-waiting on a wife or daughter, and it's said this is why one can look at their lady-in-waiting and judge the level of skill amongst the rest of their servants.

This distinction comes up quietly in this book, so I thought I'd mention it here.

Although, the nobility won't show up in the story for quite some time.

There's a part in this book where the server hardware replacement wraps up in a day, but unfortunately, this is all but impossible in real life—at least in current times. However, this book also contains some sci-fi elements. It's set in a video game with the futuristic "full-dive" technology. The speed of data copying and checks must be extremely advanced. Current home internet speeds are usually 1 Gbps, but some people get as high as 10 Gbps. Putting wireless coverage aside, smartphones are at the 5G stage now too. I wonder what they would be in this book. Speeds might even be in the tera or peta range.

CPU and GPU advancements are taking place really fast in real life too, so maybe we'll reach that point sometime soon. As someone who builds PCs as a hobby, I'm extremely looking forward to it.

All right, let's touch on the characters a bit. If you're the type to read the afterword first, go read the main story now.

We had a few new characters in this volume, both players and residents.

The new player is Anastasia's classmate, the class president. I actually struggled with this character a bit. I decided to make her petite because, surprisingly, I thought she might be too much like Eli otherwise. Then she started to seem like she might be too similar to Abby, but Abby is an energetic type of character, so I think it turned out all right.

As for the residents, we finally see the arrival of witches. Witches can have such different definitions depending on the story. In this world, they're influential doctors. I'm sure they would be extremely valuable since they can make powerful magic medicine. Most witches are on the older side, considering their powers in this story.

Lola, the magisa whose name comes up on the BBS, is the elder sister type of girl. She could also be called quite the prodigy, seeing as how she's in her twenties. She also has wonderful armor. But Sophie is the one who mainly interacts with the protagonist. As she said, being a prodigy comes with some problems.

Lola is actually younger than Sophie. She waited for Sophie to become a witch and chose her own timing based on that.

Oops. I'm out of pages, so let's leave this here.

How did you like Volume 6? Volume 7 looks like it's going to be very dense. I hope I can fit in the new arrivals, official event, and even an evolution.

I hope to see you again in Volume 7!

June, 2021



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