

Brand New 691

[Brand New Life Online: Rise Of The Goddess Of Harvest](#)

Chapter 691: Elena Thinks Her Mom's Pretty Cool!

As Elayne and the two girls walked back home, Morpheus stayed behind in the hospital for a bit, floating in midair as he glanced at the sleeping girls with his three skulls. His Dream Magic Powers beginning to act without having been told.

"I'm sorry, but to protect my Master and little Monica... I'll have to do this."

Suddenly, through Dreams, he started extracting the memories of the girls seeing what Monica did. Even if they had apologized and everything, Morpheus, on his loyalty to Elayne, couldn't help but worry they might change their mind at some point.

So he decided to extract those memories as dream bubbles, devour them, and replace them for different memories, deleting Monica from them and replacing them for the shadowy figure of Dorothea instead.

The Dream and Nightmare Spirit knew that Elayne was too nice to ever do such a thing, even if it risked them one day betraying Monica and calling her a monster, which might get her in big trouble.

So he decided to do the "dirty work" that Elayne could never imagine doing herself, nor tell anybody else to do either...

"You're never too safe, as they say..."

The floating scythe quickly disappeared from the scene, going back to Elena's shadow, where Elayne had told to keep on protecting her daughter whenever it was possible.

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(Elayne's POV)

Once we were back home, we decided to just relax for now. Monica felt much more relieved once everything was said and done, but said she felt sleepy, so she went to take a nap. I told Morpheus to watch over her as we decided to go to the gym early this morning with my daughter.

After all, I had told her that if she wanted to grow stronger and use her abilities properly, she had to get a bit more fit. And you're never too young or too old for that! In fact, the younger she starts doing exercise and a healthier lifestyle, the better.

"Ugh, I can't believe we're going to the gym- Ah, it's filled with so many normies." My daughter seemed to be lamenting her decision as we stepped inside.

"Hey Elayne, how it's going?" One of the instructors greeted me, a tall, muscular guy with short black hair and a handsome face.

"Oh, Clyde, good morning! I brought my daughter today. She said she wanted to exercise, so she'll start coming over. I wanted to subscribe her to the gym." I said.

"Oh, alright!" He was rather happy. "What's your name?"

"Elena..." My daughter sighed with a gloomy expression.

"Hahaha, come on, I know how it feels at first, but you'll get used to this place in no time!" Clyde laughed, as he helped us register my daughter for a yearly subscription.

"All's done, take your card." Clyde said, giving it to Elena.

"Yaay..." She sighed.

"Should I introduce her around?" The young man wondered.

"Nah, I'll show her the place myself, thank you Clyde!" I waved my hand.

"Yeah, if you got any problem you can come to me." He said with a friendly smile.

Elena seemed just as bored as when we got here. Her mood was quite terrible, in fact... But at the very least she wasn't complaining, her expression was just bad.

"Come on dear, cheer up a bit more. Once you start doing stuff here, you'll realize how easy it is, actually!" I told her. "How about we start with some stretching, then we go for some warmup and then for more intense cardio, huh? How about it? You can leave the strengthening of the biceps, gluteus, thighs, and shoulders and arms for later."

"Ugh, mom, I don't understand half the words you just said." Elena sighed. "But fine, just tell me what I should do and I'll try... I hope."

"Alright!"

With that, we began. Stretching wasn't too hard, although my daughter's body was really stiff, so she needed much more than I imagined.

Then we moved to some warmup by letting her walk on the walking machine for a few minutes, and then I slowly increased the speed.

She barely lasted five minutes before collapsing, through the entire run she was gritting her teeth and gasping for air... She had good grades in physical education at school, so I found it a bit weird.

"Yeah but what we do there is really basic, like we just run very slowly for a bit, and then throw balls at each other... Sometimes jumping and that's about it." My daughter explained. "It is not near as intense as this..."

"Oh well, you'll have to get used to it, dear!" I said. "Alright, let's keep going, your body needs to at least get used to warm up, if your muscles don't grow strong, you won't be able to properly use your abilities."

"A-Alright..." Elena was already sweating a lot, drinking some water. "Hahh... L-Let's do it!"

She regained some of the flame of passion in her eyes, as I nodded happily. I continued helping her get as much exercise as possible as she collapsed in exhaustion every five minutes, though it slowly increased to six, then seven, then ten!

After about three hours of all sorts of exercises, we took a warm bath in the showers (they had private ones) and walked back home refreshed.

"Uuughh... My entire body hurts..."

Elena was walking very funnily, as if her entire body was made out of strings, barely trying to hold herself together and stand properly...

"Don't worry, you'll get used to it eventually..." I laughed, giving her a head pat. "Well done, did you drink the potion I gave to you? It's specially made so it can boost your body strength and physique development."

"I did~" She yawned, showing me the empty bottle.

"Well done." I nodded confidently.

"Anyways, mom... So a lot has happened lately." She sighed, looking down.

"Y-Yeah, I guess... It wasn't within my plans at the beginning of the year for our lives to change this much." I sighed.

"Yeah... Honestly, there's so many things happening all the time, that it gets hard to keep up with my sanity..." She seemed exhausted.

"I can't relate enough to that myself..." I laughed.

"You do? But you always seem so fine." She wondered.

"Well, that's because it's my duty to stay calm. If I start to panic, and things go even worse... What else can be do?"

"Huh..."

My daughter stayed silent through halfway of the way back home, and then she spoke again.

"I think you're pretty cool, mom."

"E-Eh?"

That was really out of nowhere!

"R-Really? Even if I am a boring boomer and stuff?" I wondered.

"Yeah, even then." She smiled. "I think if I didn't you as my mom, I would had never been able to handle such a changing world as of now... So thanks for being there for me, really."

"Elena..." I smiled, containing my tears. "My daughter! O-Of course, mommy will always be there for you! No matter what!"

I quickly hugged her in the middle of the streets, some people began to stare a bit.

"Uaagh! S-Stop it! Cut it off, mom! Everyone's watching!"

My daughter tried to free herself from her mother's grasp, but that was something impossible with her weak physique!

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Chapter 692: Cookin' And Chattin'

Once back home and exhausted, I decided to start cooking something for an earlier lunch than usual. I wanted to log-in just after eating lunch, so we could start the World Quest right away and look for clues about Cloudia and Hephaestus' Forgery.

And as for my daughter, she went directly back to her room, finding Monica playing Kirby. She was a bit surprised and apologized for having used her console without permission, but Elena didn't seem to mind and joined her as a second player, playing as a Metaknight.

I decided to use some of the cold rice that was stored in my fridge from past yesterday, chopped some veggies such as green onions, carrots, tomato, and added few other things such as eggs and made some delicious fried rice.

To accompany it, I decided to take some of the chicken breasts I had bought recently, cut them into thinner pieces, covered them on some flour, eggs, some species, and salt, and then panko, and deep fried them.

Frrssshh...

The calming sound of the chicken slowly deep frying echoed in the background, I sat down nearby, and started looking at my phone, I had a few messages from my friends and Mark. I also had a ton of notifications from comments, likes, and views in my recent videos... But I ignored them for now, they were tens of thousands!

<Friend: Mark (Boyfriend)>

[Mark]: [Hey, did you bring Elena to the gym like you said you would?]

[Elayne]: [Yep, she did a lot of exercise and ended tremendously exhausted though... She's resting now, playing Kirb with Monica.]

[Mark]: [Oh alright, is Monica fine too? Nothing weird?]

[Elayne]: [We went to the hospital for a bit, to talk with the girls she had hurt due to Dorothea's control over her... It went better than I expected. Things are alright now.]

[Mark]: [Wow, you did that? Well, alright. If things are fine then that's nice. I was thinking on ending my work earlier today so we can log-in in the evening. I think I can get there to have some lunch and then go back to work for an hour or two more.]

[Elayne]: [Sure! I'll be making fried rice with karaage!]

[Mark]: [Oh nice, that sounds good! I love your fried chicken! Now this got me pumped up, I've got a bunch of paperwork here, ugh...]

[Elayne]: [Do your best! Love you <3]

[Mark]: [Love you too, se ya soon <3]

He has always been so cute when we chat on Whatsapp... He's now spamming me with stickers of cute bears sending hearts or hugging.

FRSSSH!

"Uwah! R-Right!"

I quickly took out the small pieces of chicken before they had yet to fry completely, waited until they cooled down a bit more and dropped the rest of the oil, and then placed them inside a plastic ball with soy sauce and some sweet oyster sauce.

This was the way my mother-in-law taught me how to make karaage, and I still do until now. My husband's mother was a lovely Japanese woman. She passed away a year before my husband... It really makes me sad whenever I think about her.

He still have some uncles living here that are alive, it's a big family that I meet many times. There's also obviously his father, a Canadian that lives with them in another side of the countryside. However, I recently heard they moved back to Japan after my husband's passing...

Elena's very loved by them, maybe we should go meet them soon, I want to reconnect more with my family, and even if we're not related by blood, I consider the parents of my husband, the father of my daughter, as my family too...

"And done, now let's fry them a last time..."

placed the still not completely fried chicken back in the oil, until they ended becoming perfectly crunchy, with a nice soy sauce and oyster sauce flavor to it.

As I prepared the last things for lunch, I looked at my phone, Rita had sent me a few messages... This girl's always so chatty.

<Friend: Rita (Bestie)>

[Rita]: [Sup! When are we logging in today? We just had a meal here. My hubby's back to work and my kid's at school. The baby's sleeping after drinking his milk]

I always wonder how Rita can handle her life in that small apartment with a baby, a teenager boy, and her needy husband while always being so cheerful all the time... She's definitely superhuman.

Also her kid is incredibly good-mannered despite her crazy mother's personality. I guess the boy is more like his dad.

[Elayne]: [I'll log in after eating, so maybe in around an hour? You can wait me in there and do stuff yourself too, no need to wait me for everything, Rita...]

[Rita]: [Ehhh? But where's the fun at that though? Well, if my bestie says so... I'll go explore the forest and maybe hunt monsters for fun. Some of my familiars are soon to evolve, hehehe...]

[Elayne]: [Alright~ Have fun.]

[Rita]: [Hey, wait... My hubby has been pretty curious about the game lately. Now that I've been earning a lot from it, he got interested out of the sudden.]

Oh, right, Rita has been earning some revenue I share with her from selling magic items IRL, which she handled to me from her BNLO account, she also has her own channel and is uploading videos, and they're having a lot of views too, perhaps because she's so pretty and charismatic, so she has earned a few thousand bucks lately.

[Elayne]: [It would be fun if he joined! John's a rather mild-mannered man, I remember he used to be such a rude thug before, but he has changed a lot, I would gladly be his friend and stuff!]

[Rita]: [Well he's still got some thug-like features SOMETIMES... but yeah, I've changed him a lot! It's all on the bed, bestie. Anyways, I MIGHT get him a game and the console, if he begs for it and gives me some good sex.]

[Elayne]: [Don't be so mean with him... Also do you have to be so open about it?!]

[Rita]: [Oopsie... I bet you're having some nice sex with that stud of Mark too, right? I've seen you more energetic and youthful than ever before! You're having good sex! I know it!]

[Elayne]: [Stop it! Ugh, so embarrassing...]

This girl's seriously always like this!

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Chapter 693: Logging Back In

And she kept sending messages...

<Friend: Rita (Bestie)>

[Rita]: [I'm just happy you've moved on, bestie. :') It has been so many years since then! You really needed to move on and get someone that loved you again. I know you so well, so I knew you needed someone that embraced you and truly loved you. That Mark has loved you for years now, I'm glad for him too, he got to get the milf of his dreams! Jajajaja! XD]

[Elayne]: [TT-TT Stop being so embarrassing... You have some sort of supernatural ability to make people embarrassed through text messages like nobody else!]

[Rita]: [Yeah, it's part of my new magic powers, hehehe...]

[Elayne]: [Anyways, I've been thinking about visiting my husband's family... Mostly because I consider them my family too, Elena too, of course.]

[Rita]: [Oh! Sounds nice! You should totally go! I don't know if I should come along though, I didn't know them that well...]

[Elayne]: [Yeah, I guess it's a place I should go alone with Elena, even bringing Mark could make some discourse...]

[Rita]: [Yep, the family's always been nice though, but its better to respect their privacy and stuff, especially because most of them are Japanese and all...]

[Elayne]: [Right, should be a short trip if anything... Actually it's not, they moved to Japan.]

[Rita]: [Oh...]

[Elayne]: [Yeaah, it's not going to be easy to get there quickly. Maybe I should go with you guys anyways, we could use the excuse of just going out for some tourism.]

[Rita]: [Honestly, sounds pretty good. How about we do it once we're done with the Demon King and all?]

[Elayne]: [You're so confident about something so dangerous... But you're right, let's do it once that's done. Although not even I am sure if we'll triumph completely.]

[Rita]: [How can't you? We're all so OP!]

[Elayne]: [You and your endless confidence... Anyways, see ya later, bestie. I'll go eat lunch. Mark's coming to eat too! <3]

[Rita]: [Alright, if you're feeling down just tell him to give you some oral, that always works for me.]

[Elayne]: [Facepalm:]

I decided to ignore her as I moved on, quickly beginning to serve the plates. And just as I finished chatting with her, I heard Mark knocking the door, which I opened my waving my hand and using some magic. The door was made of a reinforced wood I had already assimilated into my own, so I could easily control it.

In fact, the whole house is like an extension of my body as of now, I've been expanding my roots beneath it since everything started, fusing my magical powers with it and my wood, even as I walk outside and "separate" from it, the house remains as an extension of my body as long as I am alive.

I've even thought about creating some sort of "Magic Core" to my house, to make it even safer, the Great Spirit said that could make my House into a Magician Tower or a Sorceress Fortress, capable of both fending off beasts and monsters from entering, protecting my family as long as they're inside or around a large perimeter, and even boosting my own magic power even from a long distance, as it would be connected to my Mana Veins.

For that I need a lot of materials though, so I'll think about it later, on another occasion.

"I'm home~" Mark entered the house as he walked in. "A-Ah, I mean, I'm back..." He felt embarrassed.

"Hahaha, it's fine." I smiled. "I'm glad you think of this house as your home, dear. Lunch's done, come sit down. Elena! Monica! Come eat!"

"Kay~"

Elena's voice echoed from her room as she walked out with Monica, both were actively talking about the game and everything else. Monica had never played games before, so she was intrigued about the game she just played.

"Kirby games have a lot of lore." Elena smiled. "Eventually, you always fight some sort of eldritch god as the final boss."

"R-Really?!" Monica was shocked. "But it looked so cute..."

"Heh, that's how devs trick you into thinking it's just a little game for kids." Elena smiled.

"Woah..." Monica was really surprised for some reason.

"Looks like you two are getting along pretty well." Mark commented.

"Oh, yeah... Will you come like every day from now on?" Elena wondered.

"I-if I'm not too much of a bother..." Mark felt slightly hurt by her comment.

"Elena!" I tried to reprimand her.

"Ah, I mean, I'm not saying it's that it's a bad thing." My daughter sighed. "Just wanted to know... Ugh, my body hurts all over."

"Yeah, you'll be having that problem for a few days." I laughed. "You'll need to do this every day from now on."

"Ugh, wait, what?!" Elena cried. "I thought it was like a one-time thing?"

"Nah, you're doing it for as long as you live, keeping your body at top condition is necessary." Mark pointed out.

"Eeeeh? Ugh..." Elena complained, but still ate the meal happily. "Oh well... So when do I get to hunt Hollows?"

"Hmm, once you get a better grip at your physical and magical capabilities." I said. "Not before or after. There's a charm in you so they won't appear around you unless I let them... So for now, let's leave it at that."

"Fine." She sighed. "I'll just have to work hard for it, it is just like in BNLO anyways..."

My daughter, who usually was so careless about most things, had changed a lot. She was really decided to grow stronger IRL too and wanted to grow stronger no matter what. Be it because she wanted to protect herself or her friends, or because it was cool, or both, it didn't really matter.

I just felt a bit proud as a mother that I managed to raise her well enough, to the point she would be willing to do things she hated to achieve a greater goal... I guess it is one of the important parts needed to develop someone into a responsible adult.

We chatted about whatever, enjoying the meal with a rather light-hearted atmosphere, and once Mark went back to work, I decided to log-in.

Ding!

[Welcome to Brand New Life Online again, Planta.]

[A New NPC [Merchant of the Underworld] has appeared in front of your city.]

[He is willing to exchange his many items and perks for Nether Coins!]

Huh?

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Chapter 694: Opening The Nether Treasure Chests

"Ah, a dear customer! At long last!"

A small undead, resembling the skeleton of a goblin, wearing a black robe, and carrying a huge backpack filled with trinkets greeted me. As I flew outside of my territory, slowly descending from the walls he seemed to be growing more excited.

"Are you the Underworld Merchant?" I wondered. "Are you not allied with the Demon King of Death?"

"Oh my, no, I would never ally myself with such an evil scoundrel, dame." He said with a rather polite tone of voice. "We are an association of merchants that live in the depths of the Underworld. When the Portals leading to the Living World started to open, some of us decided to boldly explore this new world and gather whatever resources we could find! We are truly neutral, and we desire no fight either. We only care about good profits, coin, and nice trinkets."

This was one of the special NPC related to the new Event prelude the Underworld Gates opening and letting the Demon King of Death finally step out of the world of the living, which started just yesterday.

According to the information, they'll appear inside highly populated cities and areas where many Players gather, but I didn't know that my own territory would count... Well, they can't just teleport inside, so he had been waiting outside the walls.

The Spirits don't seem to hate him either, I noticed a few Spirits floating around him curiously, but none were scared or wary of him, and by just sensing his presence, he seemed very weak, I could easily slay him with a single slap.

But I would never do something so cruel to someone that means no harm... So I guess I'll play around for now and see what's up.

"I see, so you're also buying things?" I wondered.

"Indeed." He nodded happily, rubbing his skeletal hands. "If you have anything that we could find interesting or valuable, we would gladly exchange it for Nether Coins, which you can use to purchase exclusive items from our large variety of products! Items that the world of the living has never seen before! And from within you, madam, I can sense a large quantity of such coins!"

"I didn't know these coins were so valuable, I thought they were just a tiny thing?" I wondered.

"Oh no, they are very valuable and special!" The Skeleton Merchant spoke, as he took one out from his pouch and showed it to me in detail. "We inhabitants of the Underworld feed on Souls and Necrotic Energy to continue living, such energies being in small quantities across the many things within our world. However, Nether Coins contain the richest and highest quality Soul and Necrotic Energy, usually produced by powerful Undead Beasts or Undead Warriors."

"So they're your food too, huh?" I wondered. "I guess it is like back then when we humans used salt as money. Well, it is more than just money, I guess it is like exchanging food for other products."

"Indeed." The skeleton nodded. "Now, milady, I can also detect you've got some treasure chests you had yet to open. The ones dropped by the evil army of the Demon King of Death, if you open them, you could find more coins there."

"Oh, is that so?" I wondered. "Hmm, how is the situation in the Underworld. And how come is there Undead that aren't allied with the Demon King? I thought he governed everyone..."

"He does reign over a large part of the Underworld, but bear in mind that the Underworld is just as big as the living world, and it might be even more ancient. There are certain factions, kingdoms, and even nations governed by powerful Undead that do not yield to the Demon King. The evil tyrant pushed many nations aside, but once things settled, he had yet to attack anybody, and is fully concentrating on invading the World of the Living. This is perhaps why other Nations are not intervening, preferring to leave him be as long as he doesn't bother them..." The Merchant sighed. "Sadly, our huge Merchant Association has suffered many losses in the wars he provoked, the World of the Living has brought us some hope to regain some of our capital and rise back to the glory we once had."

"I never thought the Underworld was this complex..." I was amazed. "I guess if there are so many Undead, and you are as intelligent as us... It makes sense that eventually nations and other things would rise. Even if they might be ruled by different sorts of laws, the living people and undead people aren't that different, huh?"

"Indeed, we are simply trying to remain stable. If Undead like us don't absorb enough Soul and Necrotic Energies, we deteriorate and fall apart, until we turn into ashes and our souls are assimilated. To continue having our independent existences, we must work hard together to survive." The Merchant explained, he was surprisingly polite despite his lugubrious appearance.

The Underworld felt like just a completely different world rather than just a place where the souls of the dead moved into... It must have its own unique cultures, people, and nations. Perhaps it wouldn't be so bad to explore that place one of these days.

"Alright then, let me open these first..."

I quickly retrieved ten different bone-themed treasure chests from my Inventory and decided to quickly open them and see what I get.

Ding!

[You have opened the [Nether Portal Treasure Chest (B Grade)] x4!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x50!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x50!]

[You received [Spooky Skull Mask (B Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Necrotic Black Mantle (B Grade)] x1!]

[You have opened the [Underworld Gates Treasure Chest (A Grade)] x6!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x100!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x100!]

[You received [Nether Coin (S Grade)] x100!]

[You received [Phantasmal Soul Potion (A Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Necrotic Death Heart Fragment (A Grade)] x1!]

[You received [Underworld Gate Key Fragment (S Grade)] x1!]

I got 400 Nether Coins, 3 Pieces of equipment, one consumable potion, and two "Fragment" Items, which seem to be parts of a greater item.

"Ooooh! You posses such godly luck, madam!" The Merchant was amazed. "You acquired a fragment of the key to our world and... a heart fragment too!"

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Chapter 695: Buying Special Event Items

"You got two fragments! I-Incredible!" He celebrated. "Madam, just how high is our Luck Stat?!" He was surprised.

"Well, pretty high I guess." I shrugged. "Anyways, are these things important?" I wondered. "Is this really a key to the Underworld?"

The two items he was making such a big fuss about were the small piece of a black key and the fragment of a black-colored heart floating inside a crystal jar within some gooey green colored liquid.

"Indeed!" He nodded. "The Necrotic Death Heart is a special Heart that only the strongest Undead can develop through the consumption of many Souls and Necrotic Energy, yet you got a fragment! If you get three more, you could recreate the Heart! Any Undead would pay an incredible sum for it, even a fragment itself would be worth a lot... If you allow me to buy it, I would pay ten thousand Nether Coins for it!" He immediately said.

"Ten thousand for only a fragment?!" I was shocked. "Well, I don't know if that's a lot or not... And about this key?"

"It is what it says it is. We merchants are... temporarily trapped over here, until the gates open naturally. However, that key can open the gates at any time, without the need for them to open naturally, with it you could freely create a gate anywhere! However, you require three more fragments for it to be complete as well." He explained. "It's value is very high... I would also pay at least ten thousand coins for that."

"Huh, nah, I'm good. I'll keep them for now if they're so valuable and all." I smiled.

These were better news than I imagined. If I could get all the keys, I could create a gate to the Underworld and assault the Demon king with many other invited players before he were to ever get outside the Underworld to begin with.

If we can defeat him before everything begins, then the entire event that might fill our living world with destruction could be averted completely.

"I-I see." He sighed. "Well, anyways, the other items you acquired are quite special too. I've seen other Players get terrible items from the chests, but you got all valuable items! The Skull Mask grants the ability to hide your identity, and it allows you to block all sorts of appraisal, detection, mind reading, and mind altering magics. The mantle can make you temporarily invisible and grants resistance to instant death! And that potion is like a delicious wine for us, it is a highly valuable food that goes for several coins. But if the living consume them, you can strengthen your already powerful souls."

"Oh, they look rather gothic compared to my style, but I'll keep them around for now, might come in handy." I nodded. "Anyways, can you show me what you're selling?"

"For sure, here, you can check what I have available through this prompt." The skeleton seemed to smile, his empty eyes glowing bright blue.

Ding!

<Underworld Merchant Shop (Special Event Shop)>

[Available Nether Coins]: [1136]

<Consumables>

[Lesser Phantasmal Soul Potion (B Grade)] [Price]: [250 Nether Coins]

[Lesser Necrotic Power Potion (B Grade)] [Price]: [250 Nether Coins]

[Lesser Undead Essence Potion (B Grade)] [Price]: [250 Nether Coins]

[...]

<Equipment>

[Necrotic Death Dagger (B Grade)] [Price]: [600 Nether Coins]

[Bone Beast Shield (B Grade)] [Price]: [700 Nether Coins]

[Soul Eating Cursed Sword (A Grade)] [Price]: [1000 Nether Coins]

[...]

<Skills>

[Soul Manipulation (B Grade)] [Price]: [1500 Nether Coins]

[Necrotic Boost (B Grade)] [Price]: [1800 Nether Coins]

[Undead Creation (1) (A Grade)] [Price]: [2500 Nether Coins]

[...]

"You sell Skills too?" I wondered.

"Yes, that's right. We can transfer Skills to those that can pay the price." Said the Underworld Merchant. "However, it depends on the talent of the recipient if they can make good use of these Skills. The Undead Creation Skill has the number one on it because it can only make a single Undead! Higher Grade ones can make multiple Undead. These unique Skills can't level up, sadly."

"Huh, they do look interesting, but I already have too many Skills for now... I could probably buy potions, now that I think about it, if they can strengthen the soul..." I nodded.

If they can truly make my soul stronger, then my body in Earth will also be affected and might grow stronger too, as a result.

"If you're lacking funds, I do have an offer." He said. "I can buy a few of your things... I've been rather interested in what this Spirit Wood is all about. You see, highly spiritual materials or that are infused with lots of life force are precious as well, we feed on those energies too."

"I see, then I could sell you a few wood branches, how about it?" I wondered.

"Just because you're so nice with me, madam, I shall buy you five branches for 250 Coins each. I have tight funds, you see." He said.

"Fine, deal!" I said, quickly growing five huge branches out of my arms, and giving them to him, with a bonus fruit too.

"Oooh! This fruit?" He wondered.

"It's a bonus to you, so we can keep having a nice relationship." I smiled politely.

"Oh my, such generosity! We Underworld Merchants never forget such acts of kindness!" He seemed very joyful, opening a black portal, and putting everything I gifted to him inside. "There you go, 1250 Nether Coins for your generosity."

He waved his hand as the phantasmal coins materialized in front of me and then entered my Inventory in just the blink of an eye, it was honestly quite amazing to see.

Ding!

[You have received a deposit of 1250 Nether Coins!]

[Available Nether Coins: 2386]

"Nice, then let me buy as many Soul Potions as I can with these!" I said.

"Very well!" The Merchant happily said. "Soul Potions it is!"

FLAAASH!

Ten beautiful golden-colored potions emerged, made out of liquified Soul Energy, the bottles were of a transparent, black color, decorated with tiny skulls around the lid.

Ding!

[You have exchanged 2250 Nether Coins!]

[You received [Lesser Phantasmal Soul Potion (B Grade)] x10!]

"I got ten instead of nine?" I wondered.

"I've added a bonus for you gifting me such a precious fruit filled with life force and spiritual energy! Please take it without hesitation, madam." The Merchant seemed happy.

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Chapter 696: The Soul Stat

After judging that he was trustworthy, I decided to allow the Merchant to enter my territory. I conjured a special invisible barrier made of spiritual energy around his body too, so if he ever tried anything funny, this barrier would stop him from harming others. He was very weak, so I doubted he could do much himself, but you never know.

I cannot completely trust him, but some of my friends have already logged in inside the city, I want them to exchange some items at least, before he leaves somewhere else beforehand.

"Ooh, such a beautiful place, filled with life and colors! A very rare sight compared to the darkness of our world." The Merchant sighed in disbelief. "Ah, my manners are quite terrible today, aren't they? My name is Julius Skeletridge, when I was alive I used to be a rather hardworking merchant! Until a band of malefic thieves took away everything I had and burned me alive, ahahaha!"

"I-I see..." I smiled forcefully. "That sounds so tragic though... Are you alright?"

"I am as fine as you can see me to be!" He laughed. "We Undead are not always born from someone's death within the Underworld, only those that possess strong desires become Undead, born from the cold soil and the necrotic miasma pools. All of us members of the Merchant Union are very passionate about our job! Enough to walk out of our graves to earn a coin!"

"Hahaha, well, if that's what you say. For being an undead you're very cheerful, Julius." I smiled.

"Indeed I am! Instead of my friends that are quite negative, I prefer to take things differently and be more positive." He laughed. "Anyways, you shouldn't be drinking the potions so fast, won't your soul hurt, Lady Planta?"

"Gulp, gulp, gulp... Huh? Nah." I shrugged, as I drank the last A Grade Soul Potion.

Ding!

[You've consumed [Lesser Phantasmal Soul Potion (B Grade)] x10 and [Phantasmal Soul Potion (A Grade)] x1!]

[You have gained a large quantity of Soul Energy! Your Soul is beginning to grow much stronger as a result!]

[The power of your Soul is slowly beginning to overflow from your body, strengthening both your physical strength and your magical power.]

[All Stats have permanently increased by +200!]

[Once your Soul grows strong enough, it might Evolve, or forge itself into a Psyche...]

[You acquired the [Soul Forger] Title!]

[Soul Forger]

Acquisition Conditions: Be one of the first ten players to Forge their Soul through the absorption of Soul Energy.

Equip Bonus: Increases Soul Forging Speed by +50%, Soul Strength and Soul Stamina by +30%. Soul Stat +100.

A Title bestowed to the ten first Players to ever begin forging their own souls. A new path is slowly unfolding before your eyes, the power of forging one's soul is completely different than just Leveling Up or Gaining Skills, it includes comprehending things beyond the physical realm and creating a bond with your own Soul.

[The new SOUL Stat has been unlocked!]

[SOUL]: [A Special Stat that only appears once you begin Forging your Soul. It enhances all parameters that your Soul possess, such as Soul Strength, Soul Stamina, and Ethereal Power.]

[The higher this stat becomes, the stronger your soul will become, which can enhance all your abilities through [Soul Aura] or [Soul Materialization] Techniques.]

[Both improving physical might, physical fitness, magical power, and magical control. Materializing one soul will also grant new abilities and open new horizons to how some can grow and develop.]

[You permanently gained +100 SOUL Stat.]

Oh wow, that was a huge wall of text! It seems that the SOUL Stat is quite important! Glad I got it! And it feels like my real soul was indeed enhanced as well... I wonder if this is intended for everyone, or only those that Awakened?

"Hey, Planta! Oh?" Rita suddenly appeared, rushing to my side. "Who's this guy? One of Erdrich's summons?"

"Oh no, he's Julius, a merchant that sells things in exchange for Nether Coins." I presented the lil' skeleton.

"It is a pleasure to meet one of Lady Planta's friends." Julius politely bowed his head.

"Oooh, he must be those guys the event info talked about!" Rita was excited. "Okay, I've got a few coins, what do you have?!"

"You should buy the soul potions!" I immediately stopped her. "So you can get your soul stronger."

"Eh? But I wanted to check out what I can get first!" Rita complained, crossing her arms.

"If you drink them you get additional stats and the Soul Stat though also your IRL soul will become stronger too." I explained to her.

Rita still didn't get it too well though, she got angry.

"Hmm, and so? I don't care about extra stats; I'll buy whatever I want!" She said reluctantly.

My friend has always hated when people told her what to do, even if it was actually good for her, she would go out of her way to do the opposite... Oh well, it's up to her.

"Hmm, I see, I see~" She was looking at everything. "I'll buy this one instead!"

"Very well." Julius nodded, as five black potions were materialized, and Rita's coins quickly went close to zero. "Five Lesser Necrotic Power Potions for Lady Planta's friend!"

"Why did you buy those?!" I facepalmed.

"It said I could get Necrotic Powers... And I am a dark sorceress and stuff, so why not?" She laughed. "I can already kind of summon some darker things, and even a Gate of the Underworld Skill, so this fits with me~" She started drinking one potion and immediately began to cough.

"Cough, bleeh... What is this thing?! So disgusting! Uargh..." She almost vomited.

"Well, they're made of necrotic miasma." Sighed Julius. "It is not something the living can... consume too well. It must have a bitter taste, I assume. We Undead don't have taste buds, so we can eat anything."

"Uuughh... This is the worst." Rita lamented. "Agh, fine, I should have gotten the soul potions... But I'll chug these out anyways! I bought them so I'll take responsibility!"

Rita then started drinking the disgusting potions, constantly gagging and about to vomit several times. Once Mark and Lily logged-in and joined us, we decided to move to the Dwarven Country and pick up Brisingra with us, before finally meeting with Angelina's group and departing to the Luminous Kingdom without eating any more time.

Mark, Lily, and everyone else got themselves some items from Julius too, Mark got Soul Potions and Lily too, but Angelina's group weren't feeling like caring about a new Stat, and just got themselves equipment or other things... Erdrich drank Necrotic Potions too and was just like Rita, almost vomiting constantly, even as a Necromancer himself!

Nonetheless, the trip towards the Luminous Kingdom wasn't slow at all, as we decided to go through flight, sitting above my Flying Familiars such as Belle and Silver, Julius wanted to go to the city too, so we hitched him a ride with us.

The beautiful blue skies and the bountiful green grasslands across the endless landscape were truly awe inspiring, making the trip really enjoyable. The huge Luminous Kingdom emerged at the distance, it was a gigantic capital, almost as big as the Nexus City where Players gather the most.

It had beautifully paved streets, large houses, and an enormous noble district with huge and colorful manors, with the enormous white castle at the center, and of course, the Magician's Tower to the left of the city, holding a titanic-sized magic crystal on its top, floating silently.

It was really the fantasy city of dreams!

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Chapter 697: Arriving At The Luminous Kingdom's Capital

Ding!

[You have arrived at the [Luminous Kingdom's Great Capital City of Sunlight]!]

"We're finally here, everyone!" I celebrated, as we jumped off my Familiars, unsummoning them so they wouldn't make such a huge fuss.

"Oh, so this is the city, huh?" Rita wondered. "Do we have to get through the gates over there?"

"Yeah, we cannot enter without being identified by the Paladin Guards at the gates." Angelina explained. "We've come here multiple times already, so we are well known. Players usually come here to complete their Job Class Quests or to obtain Skill Books for their respective Classes. But all of you guys are quite strange in that you've grown and developed on your own instead of seeking the guidance of Job Class Masters, which you find in each Class Category Guild."

"Oh, I see, is there a Farmer Guild?" I wondered.

"N-No, not that I remember..." Angelina said. "There's a Shaman Guild if you're interested? They deal with Spirit Magic and stuff."

"Nah..." I sighed. "It's not even my class. I am a Farmer! If there's no Farmer Guild, I wonder if I could make one myself? Is that possible?"

"I don't know, but you've made yourself a Kingdom, so maybe everything is possible for you." Erdrich laughed. "The Necromancer Guild is also not located here, but in a different city very far away, and quite hidden, so I can share some of your pain."

"I remember I picked the Geomancer Class originally." Lily commented. "Which Class Master should I find?"

"Hmmm, Geomancers are from the Shaman and Druid Branch of Magician, so either of the two would do. The same for Titan I believe, nya." Anikitty said.

"I see! I wonder if I could find some enlightenment from my Class Master!" Lily seemed really pumped up. "Ah, I wonder where's Jenny? It would be nice if she was around!"

"She's at work, but she'll log-in in an hour or two." Mark explained. "Anyways, I guess the Shaman Guild would be worth visiting for me. But should I? It's not like I could find much guidance now that I've advanced so far..."

"You never have enough guidance from the Class Masters." Anikitty said. "They can give you special quests based on your current progress, and help you Rank Up much faster with bonus EXP, and even gifting you Skill Evolution Grimoires or Skill Grimoires! They're most players' allies, and who everyone relies on to grow stronger."

"Yeah, usually only those with normal Classes, that's it." Gandalf stroked his beard. "But all of you have very unique classes and evolutions, so I don't know if it could be possible to find much guidance from them... Well, it's always worth giving it a shot."

Class Guilds are sure something I remember hearing about at the beginning of the game. The Guidance Spirit said that I should eventually join a Guild once I enter one of the big cities, but I never felt like doing so, so it was eventually extended all this much.

Its not like I haven't visited cities, but it seems that the Fairy City and the Dwarven City don't count, somehow? Perhaps because they're not open for the entire public, nor are they easy to access to.

As we made our way to the City Gates through the road, we found many other Players and NPC, natural inhabitants of this world, gathered and waiting in the line. There were large carriages with merchants bringing all sorts of products.

"Ooh, fellow merchants!"

Julius ran off to meet other merchants, scaring them with his appearance and then coming back saddened that they shooed him away.

"They didn't wanted to make business..."

"Aw, well, they're naturally scared, Undead have become quite a problem lately." Angelina explained.

"But I'm sure you can make friends as long as... Oh! How about you pretend you're Erdrich's summon? This way it could work."

"I can, Lord Erdrich?" Julius asked.

"Eh? Huh? S-Sure?" The Vampire Necromancer seemed rather surprised but accepted the proposal anyways.

"Nice! Then please come with me, Lord Erdrich!" Julius dragged Erdrich around.

This time, using this excuse, things became smoother for the Undead Merchant, as he ended buying and selling items with other Merchants, making a surprising profit. He also began gathering Gold Coins, the Living's Currency.

"Gold Coins are sure an interesting currency, they cannot be eaten nor absorbed, and they are too precious to use on most weapons, armor, or anything!" Julius said. "They're vey shiny and all, but why do you people find them so precious?"

"W-Well..." I wondered. "Just flawed game design, yeah."

"It's easier when there's just a single currency and we're done with it." Angelina shrugged. "Monsters drop them too, so it still similar to Nether Coins from the Underworld in that regard."

"I see! Certainly..." Julius was very curious. "They do contain small quantities of pure Mana. Perhaps they do have some sort of preciousness to high-ranking nobles, we just don't know yet!"

"Oh, that's a possibility?" Angelina wondered. "But for what could they use gold for? To restore Mana? There's potions for that."

"Maybe we could find some answers to that interesting question in that big tower over there." Mark crossed his arms. "I am sensing tremendous quantities of Magic Power from there... Those Mages from the Magician Guild are sure powerful."

"Naturally, they're the strongest Class Guild in the city, and also they are even above the Adventurer Guild, where usually everyone has to register to access the Quests there." Said Angelina.

"Adventurer Guild?! Oh, I can register as an Adventurer too?" I wondered.

"For sure! Any Player is welcomed, nya. Even if we're demi-humans or monsters." Anikitty said. "So don't be shy and go register if you can, nya."

"Oh, that sounds interesting..." Mark nodded. "How about we do that to begin with once we get through the gates? Then we can begin looking for clues for Cloudia, Hephaestus' stuff, and also the Cult."

"Alright then, sound good. We've got three big objectives; this is not going to be easy." I laughed. "But I'm looking forward to it!"

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Within the depths of a black, dark hall, a large group of men and women wearing black cloaks and wielding huge black staffs decorated with Miasmic Jewels were chanting a ritual.

In the center of this enormous hall, surrounded by them, there was a huge, red-colored jewel, inside of it there was a small mass of black energy, swirling and twitching slowly as the cultists chanted their ritual.

"The dark one shall rise again!"

"The dark one shall rise again!"

"King of Miasma!"

"King of Miasma!"

"We will not give you up!"

"We will not give you up!"

"Rise once more, our King!"

"Rise once more, our King!"

FLAAASH!

The red crystal started to slowly glow brighter, as around the huge ritual circle, there were several bodies of restrained people, wrapped on runic chains, having their life force, soul, and blood drained, and imbued into the crystal.

However, despite its progress, it suddenly came to a halt, the sacrifices dying as they were drained of everything they held... Someone in the large hall stepped in, with a tall skeleton wearing a black cloak at his side, holding a staff decorated with skulls.

"Not enough sacrifices..." The man sighed. "How long must we keep up with this?! You said the ritual would work!"

"It will." The skeleton seemed to be delighted in the sight. "But we need more... More energy. Cloudia's Fragment... if we can get there..."

"Hmph, it's not like it is the easiest of places to enter..." The man sighed. "After all, that blasted Divine Forge Guardian is on the way."

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Chapter 698: A Rather Peculiar Country

"Halt! You're about to enter the Luminous Kingdom's Capital..." One of the many guards stopped us.

"You... seem like a rather... colorful group. A lot of filthy Demi-humans... But you're Players, so I guess it's fine, hmph... Well, you'll need to pay to enter anyways. I assume you're not registered yet."

"Who are you calling a filthy demi-human, you shit for brains?!" Rita was about to beat the man senseless, until she realized the NPC-protecting barrier activated around him.

"Rita, calm down, we can't hurt NPC, remember?" I sighed. "Sorry about that... She's quite wild sometimes. And I am rather sorry that you see us as filthy beings, I'll make sure to prove you all wrong." I smiled back at the guard. "How much is it to enter?"

"Hmph, don't get too ahead of yourself, you tree woman." The guard muttered. "But to enter... It is a hundred gold per head!" He smiled rather deviously, thinking we couldn't afford that much.

"Oh? That's cheap." Titan said. "Here." He threw thousands of coins into the man's face.

SPLASH!

"Ugh...! Y-You!"

The soldier was about to let loose, but stopped as Mark glared down at him, his body being over three meters tall, covered on flames and many animal-like heads carved on his wood, his head in specific resembled a menacing phoenix-shaped helmet, with a skull below it.

"What?" Mark asked. "I paid for everyone, let us in... Or do you want to hurt me? You know that if you dare do so, the barrier that the gods use to protect you will disappear. So let's get along, little guy."

"T-Tch... You may pass..." The guard sighed in frustration, as we walked in.

The other guards were glaring at us with similar faces. It seemed that the rumors of this Kingdom being against non-humans was really true. I thought it was just some ancient law that they had long ago forgotten about, because I first heard about it from Titania.

But it looks like they have not changed at all through this entire time! Huh, just in what basis do they discriminate against other races to this extent? It just doesn't make much sense when the entire world of Arcadia is populated by them...

"Sorry about that, we should had stepped first to explain that you came with us..." Angelina walked to my side. "They let us in without problems. As long as you've got one of these cards."

She showed us a golden card she brought out of her inventory, which showed her name, some registration numbers, the letter A- and big words saying, "Paladin Guild".

"Oh, so you don't have to pay as long as you're part of some guild?" Wondered Lily. "That's convenient! I should join the Shaman guild..."

"Yeah, more or less." Angelina nodded. "Though, still sorry about this..."

"It's fine." I smiled. "We wouldn't had gotten this far without growing to have patience against mean people, right?"

"Yeah." Mark nodded. "It was alright, though, I am still wondering why they are so... racist. Don't tell me they are just humans all over this Kingdom, when there are so many other races out there?"

"Well, the majority are humans, the second most largest group are half-elves and half-dwarves, and the smallest group is every other race that might be living here." Said Angelina. "And about their hate... Well, it's complicated."

"They didn't seem too bothered over Angelina though, because she's an Archangel and they're considered a sacred race of people they pray to." Anikitty said with a mean look at Angelina. "But yeah, this place's got its history... I'm not saying they're justified though, but there's a reason behind their hate, to an extent."

"Well, it is related mostly with history." Said Gandalf. "From what we've gathered, the Luminous Kingdom had fought in several wars in the past, most of them against invasive or barbaric demi-human tribes that once dominated the grasslands. Some that come to mind were the Lowland Orcs, the Swamp Lizardmen, or the Stonemen."

"Well, the reason why you don't see these tribes around anymore is... I guess it should be self-explanatory, nya..." Anikitty sighed. "Though we've discovered the survivors moved farther away, until the Luminous Kingdom couldn't chase them anymore. Well, they started the wars though, but still..."

"I never have heard of these things happening before..." Brisingra finally decided to speak after being silent for a while. Perhaps she felt overwhelmed by all the new people she hadn't meet before. "My Kingdom being wary of humans might have also originated from this... Though our ancient hero was a human our King adopted. A lot of our people are half-dwarf descendants."

"Of course you haven't Princess, it's history these people don't want to reveal." Laughed Gandalf.

"There's a whole Kingdoms Alliance across the Continent of Verdant named the Verdant Union. The Luminous Kingdom is one of the core Kingdoms of this Union, offering all sorts of resources to other Kingdoms in exchange for their unique ones. Because of this position, they prefer not to reveal their turbulent past to the masses, but at the same time, the racism they developed over these wars still exists even nowadays."

"It's amazing how complex this game is. It is really just a whole virtual reality, the AI is incredibly complex, to the point where it is just the same as humans." Angelina smiled. "It's fascinating, isn't it?"

"Y-Yeah..." I nodded, laughing a bit, as I glanced back at my friends.

"What is she talking about? Of course we're real..." Brisingra raised an eyebrow.

"Don't mind her." I shrugged. "Anyways, Brisingra, are you okay with just pretending to be a commoner? Maybe they could had treated you better if you revealed your identity..."

"And then get targeted by thugs or some evil plot this Kingdom might be brewing? No thanks." Brisingra sighed. "I better just pretend to be another Adventurer. It is kind of a nice change of pace, actually! Would you mind if I registered in the Adventurer Guild?"

"Oh, of course not." I giggled. "How about we go there first before going to any other guilds?" I asked everyone.

"Sure, let's do it." Mark nodded.

"Alright!" Lily was excited.

"I'm all for it bestie." Rita smiled.

"Then let's become official Adventurers!" I commanded my colorful group, as Angelina guided us across the streets, the many people around us glanced with eyes filled with surprise.

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Chapter 699: Becoming Adventurers!

"S-So you want to become adventurers... Uh huh..."

The receptionist, a blonde human girl with pale blue eyes glanced at us with a face filled with disbelief, and a bit of fear too... Our team was huge and rather intimidating.

"Yeah, can't we?" Asked Acorn, sitting over Mark's shoulders. "Angelina said we could."

"Do you dislike our kin so much, human?" Wondered Nieve, giving the girl such a sharp glare that it felt as if the temperature around us lowered dramatically. "Perhaps I should simply slice her throat, milady?"

"Eep!" The receptionist started to tremble as she stepped back.

"W-WAIT! Don't say that in front of her." I stopped Nieve and pushed her back as gently as I could. "I'm so, SO sorry about what she said! W-We just want to become Adventurers to gain some... err, money?"

"Hmph. If milady says so..." Nieve sighed, quickly sheathing her rapier back, YEY still glaring at the girl angrily...

Sheesh, I know she's an Ice Fairy and all, but does she has to be this much of a cold girl?!

"A-Alright..." The receptionist sighed, feeling slightly better because I used my magic to heal her nervousness a bit. "A-Anyways, you seem to be Players, and these people have... some sort of Player Title? I guess its fine, as you're the Gods' chosen."

So if we weren't players she wouldn't had even let us register? Yikes...

"So first of all, you need to fill up these papers." She said, slowly bringing them out one after another, and giving them to each one of us. "Please be careful not to burn it..." She said while trembling as she gave the paper to my intimidating boyfriend.

"Don't worry, my flames cannot burn as long as I don't want them to." Mark grabbed the paper and started reading it. "So we put our names, birth dates? And what else... Specializations and guilds, I see. What about our Status?"

"It will be automatically registered in this ball over here, once you fill up the papers." Said the girl. "You'll touch this ball and then we'll connect it with our magic artifact that creates registration cards. The information on the papers will be instantly sent through Mana Waves to the artifact."

Wow, it's really more advanced than I imagined. We filled up the papers with whatever we could add. Our birth dates was a bit too much so we just made them up, and then it also asked where we lived... We tried to not lie about that, although it might surprise her.

"Alright, all done. Now, each of you one after another, please touch this magic crystal, gently." She said, glaring at Nieve and Mark.

"Okay." I nodded, doing it first.

FLAAASH!

A bright light emerged from the crystal, as my basic information appeared, it didn't specify anything except an estimation of my stats, some of my skills, and an estimated race? It didn't even said I was an Yggdragon! Is there some sort of Title protecting my information from NPCs?

"Dryad, alright... This is my first time seeing a Dryad." She said. "I've heard they eat men that wander into the forest... Is it true?"

"Of course not..." I sighed.

"R-Right..." She nodded. "Next?"

Like that, we all registered, one after another, until we had to pay a hundred gold coins for each registration, and we were given copper-colored cards, they were Adventurer Cards, and they were all registered as F- Rank, the lowest Rank.

"So, to raise your Rank, you must accumulate merit doing quests." The girl explained. "You can accept quests up to two ranks above you. And remember that if you don't complete five quests per month, your license will be revoked and you'll have to pay for the registration again. Oh, and if you fail a quest, you'll have to pay a fee too."

"Geh, this guild seems more unfair than anything." Rita complained, crossing her arms. "Is this a job or something? I thought it was going to be cool and chill."

"I-It is a job, miss." The receptionist was a bit pissed off. "Anyways, come with me."

She walked out and then moved to a place on the adventurer guild building, our huge party gaining the glares of every NPC that was an Adventurer over here. Some were still shocked over our appearances, others glared at us with anger, some remained calm, and others were simply curious.

There were some Players walking around too, but they didn't even cared about us. I guess I wasn't recognized as Planta because of the clothes I was wearing, making me resemble a completely different person.

Usually in my livestreams, I wear my basic Dryad clothing, which are slightly revealing, but right now I'm wearing a big dress, fairy wings, some spirit wood armor, and even a hoodie made of leaves, so my appearance is not as easily discernable.

"This is the Quest Wall; you can pick up a variety of Quests that get refreshed almost every day." The girl explained. "Simply take the paper, bring it to me, and then I'll register you. Once the time limit is up and you haven't completed it, you'll pay a fee for taking away the opportunity for someone else to do it."

"Oh, so that's why you pay for it!" Said Lily, nodding. "I get it, missy! So what do we pick, team?"

"Hmmm..." Mark started glancing around, as the receptionist swiftly sneaked away from us, without having anything more to explain. "It would be nice if we can do some quest related with our objectives here, so we can earn merit and find clues."

"Right..." I nodded, glancing at the available quests. "Goblin Extermination, Herb Gathering, Cow Milking, Slime Extermination... Hmm, they seem a bit lame."

"Hey, how about this one?" Asked Brisingra, suddenly pointing at a ragged piece of paper, that seemed very old, it has been months since anybody picked it up.

"Oh?" I glanced at the paper and read what it said. "Looking for someone to help at the forge... Little experience needed, but don't be a brat or I'll beat you up... Ember Blacksmithing Family Forge. Huh, this is- Oh!"

"Yes, it might be related with the blacksmith we were looking for." Brisingra nodded. "How about we go check this one first?"

"Alright!"

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Chapter 700: Meeting Ambil, The Last Member Of The Ember Family

"Huh? Who the hell are ya?! Did I call for a band of freaks to deliver me something or what?"

A rude man around his sixties with brown skin, a bald head, and a short red beard greeted us as we moved across the beautiful streets of the Capital, bustling with people to reach the Ember Family Blacksmithing Forge.

It was only one of the many Forges in the Capital, actually, and the smallest and the one with the least amount of popularity too.

Why? Well, it was self-explanatory, but it was because of the blacksmith himself, who was a really rude man.

"H-Hello, is this the Ember Blacksmithing Family Forge?" I asked as politely as I could.

"Yeah, it's on the sign over there." The man crossed his arms, beginning to analyze each of us with his sharp red eyes. "So? What do you want? If you want armor and weapons, we're closed, and you can always just buy something better in the other Blacksmiths..."

"We didn't come specifically for that." I answered, showing him the paper. "We came here because of this request you left behind in the Adventurer Guild, we came to help you out on that."

"Wait, what?!" The man grabbed the piece of paper off my hands and started reading it. "Huh... Did I ever left such a thing over there? I must have been drunk, and it was probably so long ago... Urgh, are you serious about that? This is not some sick prank that you Players love to do, don't you?"

"We're serious." Mark answered. "You said you needed help on the forge, so we've come to help. I hope you don't mind us being a large group, gramps."

Right not it was just us without Angelina's party, who had decided to walk around the town looking for any new clues about the World Quest while we took care of this.

"Who are you callin' gramps, you big ol' piece of burning wood?!" The man angrily said. "But okay... FINE! If you really want to break your backs working for me, go ahead, help yourselves!"

The man walked back to his forge without saying another word, as we felt the intense heat of the forge flowing outside like a flaring shockwave, it was intense, but our levels were so high that it affected us very little, even when I was still rather weak to the fire element.

After becoming an Yggdragon, most of the weaknesses I had as a Dryad became slightly less lethal but were still there. The Dragon Scales and armor help fighting against them though.

"Well, let's get in then." I smiled.

"Ugh, I hate his attitude, he's really a douchebag..." Rita sighed. "Why do we have to do this again?"

"It's for the Hephaestus thing, miss Rita." Brisingra spoke.

"Right, the thing..." Rita sighed. "Oh well, what can we do then?"

"Let's hear the master speak first, he'll tell us what we should do!" Acorn spoke, as we walked inside the forge.

The entire place was much larger than the one over my village, despite how old the building looked like, the interior seemed still rather clean and new, it seemed to have been refurbished.

There was a huge forge blazing with red and orange flames, containing some magical components. Several anvils here and there, many stone-made furniture packed with all sorts of utensils and ores, and also ingots, and well, weapons and armor too.

The man walked towards the largest anvil, where there were some copper-colored ingots he was smelting on the flames inside a huge kettle.

"Alright, newbies, for those that don't know, name's Ambil Ember, but you'll treat me as Master Ember from now on." He smiled. "To complete your task, just do what I tell you to do. Now, you, the rat, you've got dexterous hands, right? Work on this chainmail I am making, make sure it's done by midnight."

"E-Eh? Sure... I've never made a chainmail before though..." Acorn muttered.

"I don't care. The huge tree guy, come enhance the flames with your fire."

"Sure... Is that all?" Mark wondered.

"Yeah. The dark elf lady, you use whatever magic you've got to bring me ingots and molds."

"Sure? Doesn't seem so hard." Rita nodded.

"The fairy, use your cooling magic to cool down the weapons we'll make, you've gotta have a good timing and control your magic properly. Don't screw it up."

"Hmph, I wouldn't ever fail such a simplistic task..." Nieve said.

"Heh. The tiny elf girl, you seem like you're half-dwarf, take a hammer and smack the things I give you into good shape."

"E-Eh?! Me? But I..." Brisingra was doubting.

"You what?! Are you doing the job or not? I'm not paying you if you don't work!"

"Y-Yes! I'll do it!" Brisingra cried.

"Ah, the brownie woman, you'll help on handling burning stuffs and shaping them with your bare hands. I also want you to enchant ore, can you do that?"

"I can try~!" Lily's hands were suddenly covered on metallic ores and crystals.

Everyone quickly dispersed all around the forge, doing their own jobs. Except me, I stayed standing there, looking at everyone beginning to work, Ambil then glared at me with his eyes flaring with red light.

"Oh, and the tree lady... You'll show me what you've got."

"Alright!" I nodded. "Wait, what? What do you mean?"

"I can sense it the moment I met eyes with you. Unlike all your other pals over here, you're the most dexterous and masterful with the hammer. Even though you're a tree woman, somehow..." He said.

"Come and show me what you've got. Make me a dagger with this ingot. And do it now."

"A-Are you sure?! We just met, sir..." I said, confused.

"Of course I am sure!" He said angrily. "I can feel it within you, I don't know why... It makes me frustrated even that someone completely random has it but... Your Aura, it's the same that my grandfather had. But I still have my doubts, so show me what you're made of, girl."

Ding!

[The [Special Subclass Quest]: [Find Clues About Hephaestus' Divine Forgeries] has been Completed!]

[Now that you've found out that Ember had left behind a grandson, and whose grandson knows about your strange Aura, it is time to show him what you're made of and craft something that might earn his recognition!]

[Clear Rewards]: [5.000.000 EXP] [100.000.000 Gold] [New Quest Chain]

[A New [Special Subclass Quest] related to the current [Quest Chain] has been now generated: [Forge a Dagger and impress Ambil with your Skills!]

[Ambil has given you a simple challenge! Still skeptical if you truly possess the same aura that his grandfather had, he has decided to challenge you with something rather simple, forge an exceptional dagger using the single ingot he has given to you.]

[Clear Rewards]: [EXP] [Gold] [New Quest Chain]

[Time Limit]: [4 Hours]

[Failure Penalty]: [Lose the possibility of improving your Subclass]

And right as Ambil said that the previous quest was instantly completed and a new one was generated. I guess we are right where we needed to go!

"Alright..." I sighed. "I haven't crafted many things myself though, so I hope you don't complain if I use different methods than yours. Is that alright?"

"Hmph, it's fine." Ambil nodded, glaring at me with a lot of skepticism. "Now get to it! You've got four hours!"

"Yes sir!"