

OH GOD, YES! I STARTED LAUGHING IN RELIEF. I'D HONESTLY forgotten about the Necromancer job. Wait. How the hell was the Necromancer job runic in nature? I knew that the Necromancers had to command and give orders to their zombies, right? Runic spells were too rigid for that.

The chuckling died off as I recalled the info dump that came with the notifications. Like I'd expected, none of the information that came in about the poison runic language was new to me, except that I now knew what the family was. But the information I got from the Necromancer job level was new. Necromancers depended heavily on mana control, much like the Healer job seemed to. At least from what I could gather from online forums.

I didn't really understand anything else about that though. I figured I'd gotten the job by knowing an offensive poison spell and having high Mana Control and Channel skills. That made it sound like an elemental job. Yet three runic magic types were clearly a part of the job. I just didn't understand how it all worked.

Right. Well, the question now was, what should I do? I didn't want to practice poison magic right here, during the day. The area effect of that spell was wider than the pathway, I was fairly certain, and if any children had been hiding in the bushes they could have breathed it in. That would be a great way to start this shit.

With no other choice I headed back toward my apartment; however, on the way I decided to look at the paths I could choose. Every job had some kind of choice at first level, and at every round ten after that. Plus, you could get perks as you leveled up as well, two in each grouping of ten levels. Necromancers had paths which, if they worked anything like other jobs that have paths, encouraged certain methods of fighting, though you could mix and match the next time you chose a path.

Or at least that was my understanding of the normal methods. With a deep breath, I brought up my stats, the new line somehow making everything feel more real.

< *Kathrine Baulcom / Human(Female) / Age: 20*  
*Necromancer Lvl 1.00[+]*  
*STR: 10 / END: 13 / DEX: 15 / SPD: 12 / WIS: 15 / INT:*  
*18 / CHA: 11 / MNT: 17*  
*Minion Control: 10*  
*Stamina: 125/125 / Mana: 723/775 / +2.1 stm/min /*  
*+25.8 mana/min*  
*Mana Conversion: 75% >*

Nothing had changed. No bonus intelligence or mental fortitude. Both of which I felt like would be useful for this. Of course, I wasn't really expecting that. The general rule was that jobs didn't do that, but I'd still kind of expected it. A lot of shows made it out like there was an advantage to obscure jobs, and I knew better than to believe them. But it seemed I had still fallen into that trap.

Focusing in on the little plus button next to my Necromancer job, I pulled up a list of paths. Another quick focus in, and the back of my mind was filled with the information for the two paths I had available.

< *Necromancer Level 1 Paths:*  
*Bone Walker*  
*Flesh Shaper >*

< Bone Walker

Requirements: Necromancer Level 1

Description: Bone Walkers are Necromancers who favor the creation of bone-based minions over zombies. Bone-based minions, like skeletons, are better at taking instructions than zombies would, but they lack the durability that greater quantities of flesh would allow. For this reason they are often armed with weapons and armor made from bone and flesh.

Effects: Gain Bone Walker I perk, Runic Magic (Bone) V, and Golem Creation V >

< Flesh Shaper

Requirements: Necromancer Level 1

Description: Flesh Shaper Necromancers focus on the creation of minions made of flesh rather than skeletons. Flesh-biased minions, like zombies, are more durable and easier to control. While lacking the coordination, and complexity, to use weapons, these minions are the most receptive to magical enhancement.

Effects: Gain Flesh Shaper I perk, Runic Magic (Flesh) V, and Golem Creation V >

Lots of information there. To be honest, I was surprised at the existence of the Bone Shaper path. I didn't remember any Necromancers using skeletons. Not that I remembered a lot of Necromancers. The most famous one

was in South Africa. And he was definitely using zombies. Stupidly powerful zombies, but zombies nevertheless.

I did remember some southern Necromancer who had a thing for waterlogged zombies. Apparently he'd lived in some bog or swamp or something. But he went for waves upon waves of zombies. I remember that, because there was an interview with someone where they were trying to figure out how he could create more than one zombie from a corpse. He had avoided answering the questions with enough skill that it had been circulated just for the amusement factor.

As I padded up to my apartment, I wondered which to choose. Like I had said earlier, there were advantages to being the first to branch into a new area or path for a job. Mostly those advantages came from being able to sell knowledge, but the Necromancer job was rare enough that I didn't know if that would matter.

The problem I had was the Golem Creation skill. If it was elemental in nature, I would need as much help as possible. But if it was runic, maybe not. I wasn't sure. Fortunately, I knew a few people who would be willing to help me. Heading back to my computer, I sent out a text in the group chat consisting of Eric, Alice, John, and myself.

**Kathrine:** Hey guys. I finally popped a job.

I only had to wait a few minutes before they started responding. Long enough to pull up a basic information website. It wasn't really meant for people with the job but was likely the best I could find right now.

**Eric:** Let me guess. Something you didn't expect.

**Kathrine:** What makes you say that?

**Eric:** You're not celebrating.

**Alice:** So tell us what you got.

**Kathrine:** Necromancer.

There was a pause while I was asking the search engine if Necromancers could use skeletons. The general answer seemed to be more of a "why would they?" A couple of minor Necromancers who weren't important enough to have made even rare job news noted that they could, but cited the need to arm them as a major negative against ever using them.

**John:** Be prepared for some uncomfortable moments when people start asking you to explain your job. I've seen enough people with rare jobs. Like a Warlock and a Kinetic.

**Alice:** Creepy. Zombies always make me shiver. I live far too close to the Asylum.

**Kathrine:** I have two level 1 choices. Bone Walker that's for skeletons and Flesh Shaper for zombies.

I searched for Necromancers with skeletons. I only found mentions of a few in Africa and South America. The pictures weren't great, and those continents had become even more isolated in the last decade, meaning there wasn't much to work with.

**John:** Do the skeletons have weapons? Do you know that kind of thing?

**Alice:** Pick skeletons.

**Eric:** What's most common?

**Kathrine:** Zombies are most common. And all the high-level Necromancers I can see have zombies. Yes, skeletons can have weapons, and they can also have armor. But as one site I read pointed out, their weapons wouldn't measure up to a gun.

**John:** Look up medieval weapon testing and HEMA vs Dungeons. Bows are more effective than you would expect, but yeah, guns sort of change the world.

**Eric:** Most people doing zombies would let you learn from their mistakes. But you might suffer from their mistakes as well...

**Alice:** Go the road less traveled!

**Alice:** Yes! Do what Eric said! Avoid bad assumptions.

**Kathrine:** Haha. Yeah, also, there might be hidden factors in the runes that govern bone and whatnot that changes things. Maybe skeletons can cast spells later on?

**Eric:** Don't get overexcited about what might be. You could disappoint yourself again.

I cringed at Eric's comment. He was right about that, I had gotten overly excited about something and the crushing disappointment when my beliefs were proved false had me ranting to him for hours. So yes, I would shelve the idea of magic-casting skeletons and start thinking about something else. John's idea had some merit. I pulled up the HEMA vs Dungeon videos.

Vintage videos! These dated back to the early days of the system apocalypse when things were just starting to go weird. No one really knew what to do, and a lot of veteran

dungeon Divers still used swords because they had twenty or more levels in melee classes. While everyone was hoping to find some solution to the problems of the sudden, new monsters, everything was tested.

And what an assortment of weapons these groups tested. And still test. They were posting under a new name, but people were still testing all kinds of weapons, including melee ones, in Europe. I watched some of the small unit tactics videos, as I assumed I would have a small unit of skeletons to work with. Probably a good assumption, given the numbers of zombies noted as “common” for level 1 Necromancers.

I was surprised how effective the shields and spears were. Apparently having a single sword or something like that as a backup was helpful as well. It was the polearms that caught my attention, however. If I could figure out how to make one of those, well, the spear/spiked hammer-looking things seemed like they would have a lot of different uses.

However, the groups clearly stressed the need for a sword or axe backup. Just in case. I didn’t know if I could make my skeletons smart enough to switch weapons. Though, supposedly they could handle more complicated commands. And I would need some way for the weapons to be secured in a scabbard or something else.

I wasn’t sure, though if I chose skeletons I would definitely do shields, they were far more effective defenses than the media made them out to be. Hmm. I could work with this. Definitely interesting.

Looking back at my phone, I saw some conversation where John was explaining that he was interested in weapons of all types and that HEMA groups in Europe were really effective at fighting monsters with melee

weapons. He claimed they had real success, even as they mixed firearms and other weapons in.

**Kathrine:** Hey, John. Good idea with the HEMA videos, I'm definitely watching a number of them before I make my decision.

**Alice:** Good. Sounds like a smart idea.

**Eric:** How would you make ranged attacks?

**Kathrine:** I picked up the Necromancer job when I accidentally made a Poison Bomb spell, so that would work.

**Eric:** Are you ok? Do you need to go to the hospital?

**Kathrine:** No. Do you really think I would be stupid enough to cast an uncertain spell at my own feet?

**Eric:** Yes. Are you telling me you didn't breathe in any of the poison?

**Eric:** I thought so.

I frowned at Eric and pulled up my spell list. There were now two sections—general spells and Necromancer spells. It wasn't hard to pull up the Necromancer spell list and take a look at the Poison Bomb spell. Also known as the only spell on that list.

#### < Poison Bomb

Description: Launches a bladder of poison gas which bursts and spreads the gas over a wide area. The poison gas is heavier than air and must be breathed in, which limits the range at which most would be threatened by it.

*Effect: A weak poison that makes it hard to breathe and causes nausea. Non-lethal.*

*Necromancer / Runic / Poison >*

**Kathrine:** The poison the spell creates is non-lethal. Causes nausea and all that. A problem in a fight, but of minor concern otherwise.

**Eric:** Rrrright.

**John:** Depending on how large an area it covers and how monsters are affected by it, that's a dangerous spell. Distractions during combat are killers. Don't hit your allies with it.

**Kathrine:** That's the plan.

**Alice:** I bet monsters are affected the same as anyone else. Magic tends to be consistent in how it affects things.

**Kathrine:** Very true. And yeah, I mostly assumed it would be the same. Though I suspect most monsters have high constitution scores which protect them from poison. Don't know how magic poison fits in to that.

**John:** Don't count out ranged weapons for your skeletons. I just remembered a really old weapon called 'a spear launcher' that could be useful if you can't find a way to make a bow string.

I opened another set of tabs and started looking into these "spear launchers." I wasn't certain about making bow strings, but if there was a way to do ranged weapons without strings, that might work. Though it looked kind of silly. Not that its looks were important. But still.

**Kathrine:** Don't know about the spear launchers, they're kind of silly looking.

**Alice:** If it works?

**Kathrine:** Yeah. I know.

**Eric:** Can you make flesh while being a bone Necromancer?

**Kathrine:** The runes don't stop existing.

**Eric:** You told me some things, like sinew and muscle can be used as thread and cord.

**Kathrine:** Holy crap, yes! You're a genius!

**John:** If you can manage it, find a way for your skeletons to not need their heads. That will increase their survivability.

**Kathrine:** You're right of course, John. No idea if it's possible. I'll need to make some spells, and probably some actual skeletons before I can be sure.

I leaned back while the conversation continued, only contributing a little. Several suggestions for different things you could do for different types of skeletons, and eventually zombies, popped up. I was more focused on looking at weapons, shields, and of course different "basic" zombie types.

I think I would go with skeletons. Even if over half the suggestions weren't useful, or just couldn't be done, there were a lot of ideas in this conversation. I pulled out a new five-subject notebook and labeled it "Necromancer Ideas." For a moment I stared at the title. I really was a Necromancer now, wasn't I? I had no idea if I would find my undead creepy or not.

On the other hand, I was pretty much stuck with the Necromancer job. Your first job was always visible when you pushed your status out. Something like the

Necromancer job could be a gold mine in the dungeons, a unique job that could reduce the danger of escort missions. Or even help pack out resources.

As I started noting down ideas, I also realized I was most interested in the skeleton ideas. It was unique and interesting. Plus, I really just enjoyed the process of creating my own spells. Eric was right if faulty assumptions were made as a part of the larger canon of zombie spells, and there were definitely enough Necromancers out there that at least the national guilds had to have some information, even if they didn't have a Necromancer in their guild.

Even with all that, I like the idea of skeletons, and Eric was right. With magic, sinew would make an effective bow string, and might make more. In fact, there were a lot of things that fell under "flesh" that could be used to enhance simple skeletons.

*< You have chosen the path of the Bone Walker!  
Bone Walker I perk gained!  
Runic Magic (Bone) II has become Runic Magic (Bone) V  
Golem Creation V has been created! >*

I grinned as I asked my friends for ideas for arming my skeletons and started noting down the ones I liked. There were plenty, and they sparked ideas of my own. I had a good feeling about this. The extra information from Golem Creation, Bone Magic, and Bone Shaper caused me to note down everything I felt mattered. This was definitely the right choice. There was so much to research.