

A New Life
Wednesday – 09.07.62

“WELCOME TO THE SANCTIFIED DEVILS. LET’S GET YOU settled in.”

The Sanctified Devils had won out over everyone else for two reasons. The Darkest Days and the Sanctified Devils not only had the only decent-sized dedicated magical range, but they were the only ones to offer any help for building my Necromancer spells. The DDs had two members who had actually worked with a Necromancer before, and they had a summons-based Druid who was willing to help me with the Golem Creation aspect. However, I would still have to develop my own runes, which was the most time-consuming part of the process. The DDs didn’t offer me a sign-on bonus like the Sanctified Devils did, and while it felt a little like a sell-out, I still think it was the best decision I had.

After all, I was spending all 2.5K on a top-of-the-line mage’s armor set. My new armor was rated to survive most attacks from every monster in the Scrags of the Balltown dungeon. It was also 100% bullet proof against any pistol or sub-sonic rifle fired by someone with less than five levels in a combat job. Which was just ridiculous. And all without metal or ceramic plates, and it only weighed about twenty-five pounds.

Which was depressing, as the armor for non-magical jobs at the same price weighed over eighty pounds and could stop shots from military grade hardware fired from the same level 5 individual. And I didn’t even want to know what happened when someone with defensive bonus

skills and abilities put on said heavy armor. I had a feeling I'd end up crying.

By the way, magic armor costed northward of 10K minimum. Even the most basic magical trinket costed over a thousand. Of course rarity was a part of this, but the rest was novelty. It had been twenty years, and people were still uber-excited about any amount of magic being a part of their stuff. Seriously, it was like half the world couldn't believe magic was real.

Grinning, I followed Sandy back into the computer lab. She set me up with the local spell-crafting database and I started right away. I was told orientation was a week from Saturday, with our first dive into the dungeon the next day.

I didn't have access to the enchantment database just yet—they needed to set that up with IAS—but I was told to expect it Monday. That was fine, because there was something I needed to work on first. Elemental knots.

Fortunately, there were all kinds of tricks and tips in the spell-crafting database, many of which I'd never heard of. Which made the goal of improving on my absolute worst skill far more achievable.

Five minutes in and I had two different exercises to practice knot creation, and I was eagerly trying the first one. First I surrounded my hand in a mist of mana, and then I set to work "spinning" said mana into threads as if it were cotton. This was too slow for proper spell casting, But it was a way of getting used to casting this kind of magic.

"Hey, you're a new hire, right?"

I jumped a little, losing control of my mana along the way. Annoyed, I looked at who was talking.. some guy currently in armor looking mildly bored. Figuring I should be polite, I answered, "Yes."

Apparently he picked up on my annoyance. "Interrupt a steamy daydream?"

"No, practice. There are exercises here that I've never attempted before." I was probably scowling at him by now.

"No need to worry. I won't say anything." He seemed upset that I didn't agree with him. Somehow. "Well, whatever. There's no reason to worry. This weekend will be easy. Mostly boring. And the guild always starts you off slowly to make sure you're never in any danger."

"Thanks. I already know that." I'd seen enough videos from orientations to know what the hunt in the dungeon would be like. "But I need to practice my magic if I'm going to do anyone any good in the dungeon this weekend."

"No need to be cagey, we're all here to help." He shrugged. "My advice is to relax. Until you've fought in the dungeon at least once, it's unlikely you really know what you need."

I simply ignored him and went back to my work. If he was going to ignore what I had to say, I didn't see the point in talking to him.

After a few minutes, someone poked their head in the door and I was left alone as the annoying person left. It was much easier to work on my magic without someone frowning at me the whole time. I guess he was one of those people who assumed magic just sort of popped out of nowhere or something. Disheartening really.

A half hour later I had to fend off someone wanting to play ping-pong. Then someone else was looking for a person to talk at. Frustrating as that was, in reality, it was better than before. I could tune out the nervous chatter from them. As far as I could tell, the computer lab wasn't used for research. Everyone in here was talking to

someone else, and this being an apparently slow day, I was the only person here.

Eventually they noticed I wasn't paying any attention and the "chatty Cathy" left in a huff. Still, I could tolerate some interruptions to get access to the database. There were a lot of available spells and runes to draw inspiration from. Once I got the full data I was offered, I doubt anyone could distract me.

"Kathrine?"

I turned to the new interruption, only to spot a chick wearing a polo and khakis. "Yes?"

"My name is Erica, I'm one of the officers here. You really shouldn't push your guildmates away like you have been."

"Look. This is a computer lab, and all I want to do is get better at my magic so I can fully participate in the orientation weekend, rather than just sit around and let everyone else do the fighting."

"I understand. I really do, you know. But in the long run it's far more important to have a good relationship with the rest of your guildmates."

I had no idea what Erica was talking about. "And how will my long-term relationships benefit if the first time I'm in the dungeon I can't even cast one useful spell? All because people keep interrupting me when I'm trying to *study in the computer laboratory*?"

Erica frowned; apparently I'd touched a nerve somewhere. "Because you're acting like you're above people who don't know as much as you do. Arrogant, don't you think?"

"Or I'm trying to learn enough to do my part when we go into the dungeon. Honestly, that's more important, don't you think?" Seriously, why did these people think

that dungeon diving wasn't important? They were in a guild!

"No, it's important, just nowhere near as useful as you're thinking. No one expects a Necromancer to be able to put out minions during the first weekend."

I gave her an odd look. "Everyone who even knows Necromancers are a thing will expect some kind of undead. That's just how people think."

"Well, yes. But when you explain that you've only just gained the job, they will understand. Assuming you've made nice with them."

"Or they will look at me like I'm crazy because, like most people, they don't know how magic works." Seriously, how hard was it to understand. I didn't hold it against the other people I'd talked to, they weren't spellcasters, nor were they in charge and needed to understand how these things worked.

"I'm not saying don't study. I'm saying don't stress about it and be nice to your fellow guildmates. Play a game and then go back to work. Talk to them."

I rolled my eyes in non-committal agreement. Hopefully Erica would be off duty in an hour or two and I could come back after getting food. I'd always worked best in large blocks free from interruptions. That wasn't going to change just because someone thought it wasn't "healthy." Fortunately, I could continue to work on the exercises at least. For more in-depth work I would need to be back here.

If that didn't work, I guess I could start taking notes on everything and do my studying at home. Somehow I thought Erica would be even less supportive of that if she knew.