

MMORPG: The Almighty Ring

Chapter 3: In-Game Encyclopedia

Before getting started, Jiang Fei decided to calm his nerves and regain his bearings. He took a deep breath and opened up his status window.

Name: Verdure Glider

Level: 0

Class: Beginner

Profession: None

Experience Points: 0/100

Health Point: 110/110

Mana Point: 100/100

Physical Attack Power: 10+1

Magic Attack Power: 10

Physical Defense: 5+1

Magical Defense: 5

Strength: 10 (Determines a character's Physical Attack. Human race Physical Attack gain 1.0, Beginner Physical Attack gain 1.0.)

Agility: 10 (Determines a character's Attack Speed, Movement Speed, and Dexterity. Human race Agility gain 1.0, Beginner Agility gain 1.0.)

Vitality: 11 (Determines a character's Health Points and Physical Defense. Human race Health Point gain 10, Physical Defense 0.5. Beginner Health Point gain 1.0, Physical Defense 1.0.)

Intelligence: 10 (Determines a character's Magic Attack and Magical Defense. Human Magic Attack gain 1.0, Magical Defense gain 1.0. Beginner Magic Attack gain 1.0, Magical Defense gain 1.0)

Spirit: 12 (Determines a character's Health and Mana point regeneration speed, Skill Mastery speed. Recover 1 Point of Health and Mana every 5 seconds in out of combat status per Spirit point. Recover 0.1 points of Health and Mana every 5 seconds in combat status per Spirit point. Beginner gain 0.)

Skill: Focus Strike

Focus Strike: Attacks the enemy instantly, dealing 120% damage. Increase 10% Critical Chance for 10 seconds. Cooldown: 5 Seconds.

The standard Human Beginner would have two complimentary system gifts; a wooden sword and a cotton shirt, which were equipped by default. They were not without any attribute whatsoever, but he might as well be naked.

Jiang Fei gazed around. The Beginner's Village did not offer anything impressive. Everything there was just the bare essentials — the bread and butter of all MMORPGs. There were a total of 12 NPCs around, and only nine quests available. One quick chat-and-grab run would allow a player to easily accept all quests.

“O great Adventurer! You have arrived! Our restaurant has exhausted all our food supply! Could you please help us collect 10 pieces of Chicken Meat? You would be duly rewarded!”

“O great Adventurer! You have arrived! We have used up all the leather in the tailor's shop. Could you please hunt and gather 10 pieces of Deer's Skin? You would be duly rewarded!”

“O great Adventurer! You have arrived! We have run out of herbs to make medicine for the people! Could you please gather 10 Briarthorns? You would be duly rewarded!”

It was all the same... The same conversation starter, the same reply options... Nothing gets old.

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“This is getting out of hand. We're way too overpopulated!”

Jiang Fei sighed. Beginner quests from a Beginner's Village would be easy. That was a given. The problem now was a disproportionate ratio between the player/monster population. A monster would only be permitted its pathetic existence for an eternity of half a second before its head would roll to the ground, having been lobbed off by any single person in a sardine-pack full of players before being stamped into the dirt. The monsters could offer no resistance whatsoever. It was being the early bird and picking up your spoils that was quickly becoming a major pain in the neck.

Just as Jiang Fei was on the verge of losing his temper, he found a monster that had yet to have found itself a dance partner. He dashed towards it. That was when something interesting happened.

Plymouth Rock Chicken (Beast, Normal)

Level: 1

Health Point: 50

Attack Power: 5

Skill: None

Note: Beginner's Village weak monster. Low hostility. Related Quest "Collect Chicken Meat." Quest Initiator: Restaurant Owner.

"Woah! What the-? That's a lot of detailed information!"

Jiang Fei stopped dead his tracks and stared at the information popup. Before playing the game, Jiang Fei had done some research on Dawn Break. According to the publicly released information, some skills allowed identification. Only players with said skill could have access to the monster's name, level, and Health Points. Such information was not accessible to just anyone!

However, not only was Jiang Fei able to read such detailed information about the monster, he was even able to see if it was related to any other quests! Even the quest initiator would be revealed! It was basically an encyclopedia of the game! Jiang Fei stared at the ring in his finger.

The ring hummed and glowed slightly, as if it was acknowledging him, aware of everything.

"Could this contraption be a hacking tool...?" Jiang Fei mumbled to himself.

"Argh!" Jiang Fei lightly slapped himself. "I can't stop halfway to think about this thing each time! Time to grind and level up!"

Jiang Fei was the kind of guy that would not say no to fun. Anything that he could not solve or understand at the moment would be tossed to a corner of his head and forgotten. His attention was now set on grinding!

"Ding! You have killed Plymouth Rock Chicken. Obtained 2 Experience Points. Obtained 1 Quest Item Chicken Meat!"

In the game, all quest items would be automatically be deposited into the player's inventory. Other items such as potions, equipment, and ETC items would require manual looting. Remains of a recent kill would emit a faint light if loot was still present.

Now that he had found a target to slay, Jiang Fei wasted no time at all and jumped at the next poor little chicken. This skill would be given to all players by the Village Chief.

“Ding! You have used Gathering and obtained 1 Chicken Meat!”

After collecting the item, Jiang Fei's first grinding session in Dawn Break commenced.

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“Ding! Congratulation! Player Verdure Glider has reached Level 1! All Attribute Points +2!”

As his ears reverberated with the chime of the notification, Jiang Fei's euphoria quickly faded. That name. That ridiculous name. He had known sooner, he would have ended up with a better name! However, if he were to delete his character and start over, he would need to wait for an entire week to recreate a character! Jiang Fei would never allow himself to waste that much time! There was no choice but to swallow his shame.

In this game, characters below Level 10 would have all Attribute Points evenly distributed. 10 Attribute Points would be given for every level gained. Prior to Level 10, a player's Attributes would gain 2 points each. After that, those 10 Attribute Points would be split in two. Five would be evenly distributed, and the other five would be given to the player to manually invest.

“WOOHOO! Time to kill!”

After gaining a level, Jiang Fei, who was now slightly more agile, rushed towards a field of Wild Rabbits.

“Ding! You have killed Wild Rabbit! Obtained 5 Experience Points! Obtained Quest Item: 1 Lucky Rabbit's Food!”

“Ding! You have used Gathering and obtained 1 Delicious Rabbit's Meat!”

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Two hours later, Jiang Fei was already Level 4. Along the way, he got his hands on another equipment; a torn Cloth Armor Lower Pants which provided more modesty than Defense.

At that point, the system blared out a warning about how his inventory was at full capacity. Many items had already been moved into the mysterious ring inventory. There

was only one minor caveat about the ring. Items from the ground could not be directly placed into the ring's inventory. He had to manually move all the items from his own character's inventory into the ring's inventory before being able to loot anything more from the ground. As such, to ease his gameplay, Jiang Fei had moved all the ETC items into the ring's inventory and only placed the quest items in his character's inventory.

"Eh? Something is wrong!"

As Jiang Fei was moving some items from his character's inventory, he found that several items in the ring's stock were missing.

"Hmm? Did I lose them somewhere?"

Jiang Fei held the ring up to his eyes. At that moment, he heard a tiny chime.

"Ding!"

A chime so soft that one could have easily missed it. When the chime rang, a piece of Delicious Rabbit Meat disappeared from his very eyes.

"What the f-"

Jiang Fei gasped. Was the ring actually taxing him?!

He looked closer than ever, finally uncovering a new secret of the ring. On the surface, the ring seemed to come with 36 slots, but they worked very differently from a regular character's inventory. It appeared to come in two portions, top and bottom. The top half of the ring's inventory had a very faint blue in its background, while the lower half had a faint red. If he had not been paying attention, he would have never seen it.

This newly uncovered secret was the fact that any items placed in the red section of the ring's inventory would eventually "disappear," after every 10 minutes or so. It was not fixed. Each time an item was "consumed," a crack-like mark would appear on the ring. It was just a mark, not an actual indication of any damage to the ring. The scar grew as the ring consumed more items. After two hours, the scar had grown so long that it had almost made a complete circle.

"Ding!"

As the last item vanished with the chime, the "crack-like" marks had formed a complete circle on the surface of the ring.

"Woosh!"

A bright light flashed, and the scar in the ring vanished, leaving behind a flawless, silver surface, as if it was freshly made out of the refinery.

“What is going on...?”

Jiang Fei cocked his head.

“Huh! What’s this? Bonus attribute!”

Besides the 36 slots that the mysterious ring provided, there was something a little extra! Luck +10!

Luck was a hidden attribute in the game. Players called it that way, since it could not be quantified or viewed on their Attributes Window. In the game, some equipment provided Luck as an additional attribute buff. This attribute affected a player’s Evade chance, Critical chance, and item Drop Rate, even!

Luck induced Evasion was not determined by actually physically moving away from an attack. An attack may appear to fully land on a player, but the player would sustain no damage whatsoever!

It will be the same as Critical strike chances. Players may be able to deal three times the regular attack damage when one uses active skills to cause damage, or even when striking the enemy’s weak spot. Critical strikes relied fully on the R.N.G system. (Random number generator). A successful proc (Programmed Random Occurrence) would deal double the regular damage, while completely ignoring Defense value. In some situations such as fighting with an enemy with high Defense, a Critical strike would deal more than triple the damage commonly seen.

Drop rate has been and would always be a source frustration for all MMORPG gamers. There was nothing else that a player could do besides pray to the R.N.G. Lord and ask for His grace. However, when a player had enough of the Luck attribute, the odds would be in your favor, especially it comes to Drop rate. Still, great Luck did not necessarily mean that one would find a Celestial tier weapon from a Level 1 Chicken. Luck only involved the pre-set drop table of that particular monster. For example, if a Chicken had possible grade A, B, and C drops, high Luck enabled a higher chance of yielding a grade A drop. On the other hand, a luckless chap could only dream of living under the shadow of a grade A drop.

“Just what is this ring...?” Jiang Fei mumbled to himself. He was sure that the ring was not part of the game. It behaved less like a regular item and more of a hacking tool! It was not recognized by the system, but it was working in the game just fine!

“Crap... I don’t exactly condone hacking, not to mention how I might even get banned from this game... But if not for this ring, I would not even be in the game, to begin with!”

The dilemma infuriated Jiang Fei. However, it was also his only key to playing the game. There was just no other way.

At that point, Jiang Fei had gotten a fair grasp on the ring's function. The mysterious ring gobbled items up to "level up." The scar on the surface of the ring was the representative of its "exp bar," and the red background in its inventory was the "killzone." But, what of the blue colored ones?

After thinking about it for a moment, Jiang Fei could not come up with any explanation, nor did he find anything particular about it. As usual, he shoved it aside and enjoyed the game without any further care.

Seven to eight hours later, Jiang Fei returned to the village, lugging all the required quest items along with him. He was still Level 4. What a pain. Dawn Break was a slow and arduous process, as gaining levels sure took some time. It was the same for the drop rate. Even with 10 Luck, Jiang Fei had found it remarkably difficult to get a good fix on his desired items. The quest items had taken him almost an hour each!

"Bless you, adventurer! Bless you! You have saved me! Please take this Deer Skin Leather Jacket!"

"Ding! You have completed the quest "Collecting Deer Skin." Obtained 550 Experience Points. Obtained Deer Skin Leather Jacket!"

After submitting the first quest, Jiang Fei had obtained little experience points and a White tier equipment. Although it was painfully cheap, it was the kind of reward one could expect from a lowly quest in the Beginner's Village.

The game categorized equipment grades as such: Gray, White, Green, Blue, Violet, and Gold. Outside those categories were also Unique types, the Chromatic Evolving Equipment, and finally, the greatest of them all, the Celestial grade.

Gray equipment had been established as the lowest tier in the equipment grading, as only players in the Beginner's Village would equip them. This equipment adds only less than 50% of the basic attributes (TL NOTE: Author did not explain what the basic attributes were). When a player outgrew the Beginner's Village, any Gray equipment would most likely be sold to NPCs, as they were not even worth using.

White equipment was the bare-bones equipment that provided some basic attributes. Nothing additional would be gained from them. (TL NOTE: Again, no explanation of what basic attributes are). Equipment of this grade could be sold to NPC, but they could also be broken down into Metal Ingots and sold to players. Players would then use the Metal Ingots as materials for their Smithing skill. The end price would be higher than selling the equipment itself.

Green equipment was named Fine equipment. They provided 130% basic attributes and even provided one or two additional attributes. If the equipment had two additional attributes, it would be classified as the Refined amongst the Fine grade. Most players would be walking about with this.

Blue equipment were Superior Grade. They provide 150% of the basic attributes, and provided two to three additional attributes. Even if two additional attributes was equal to the Refined Green equipment, it still provided more basic attribute percentages. If it had three additional attributes, the equipment would be highly valuable and particularly strong. When the game reaches maturity with more and more players reaching mid-game content, players would wielded such equipment would be considered elites.

The next grade was coded in Violet text, and was called Epic. They provide 180% basic attributes and had three to four additional attributes. Likewise, even the lesser variety that only provided three additional attributes were already superior to their Blue equivalents. Violet equipment was like owning a premium sports car such as a Lamborghini, or a fancy Birkin handbag. Only a handful of players would be able to get their hands on them. One would already be formidable, even among professional players, if they had even one article of Violet tier equipment in their armory.

Gold texted Legendary equipment provided 200% basic attributes with an additional four to five other attributes. Like all the grades before this, their lesser varieties were still superior to those that provided an equivalent amount of additional attributes. (TL NOTE: Repeat... Repeat...). As the nickname implied, it was almost impossible to have a full set of Legendary tier equipment. Having one of them alone would already turn a player into an idol!

Chromatic Evolving equipment were special and Unique. They could only be obtained from Hidden Class Quests. Their power levels were similar to the Legendary equipment. What that set them aside was their potential to gain experience along with their wielders. It would be downright stupidity if one were to discard them! Also, Hidden Class Quests did not necessarily provide one with such a gem. Unlike the Hidden Race quest, which was only limited to 36 in the entire game, Hidden Class Quest was slightly less rare; but they are still notoriously difficult to come across! One required truckloads of Luck for this!

Lastly, at the top of the food chain was the Celestial Grade. One could only obtain such an equipment grade by slaying a God! The attributes alone could blow one's mind and the road to procuring it was... Just as mind-blowing.

Chapter 5: A Superman Dream

After running around the village, Jiang Fei was finally done with the quests. From the beginning, Jiang Fei had been walking about with a full set of the weakest tier equipment. The quests had rewarded with him a few better alternatives. While hunting, he had managed to procure a pair of Gray grade lower pants. Even so, it barely helped — it better served a trash can. At that moment, Jiang Fei had already managed to equip a full set of White tier equipment. It was still weak, but it was significantly better than a full set of Gray tier equipment.

When he returned to the village to submit the quest, he was Level 4. By the time he completed all the quests available, he had gained enough experience points to reach Level 6. However... It did not seem like he would be “graduating” from the Beginner’s Village anytime soon.

“Ding! Attention, players. The server will shut down in 30 minutes. Please prepare yourself before the allotted time. Today’s session is about to come to an end!”

Dawn Break was brilliant in a way that its servers only ran for 8 hours a day. That was a full 24 hours of gameplay while players still got a full 8 hours of sleep! It did not disrupt one’s daily lifestyle, allowing one to function normally while enjoying this virtual heaven in their uninterrupted sleep! A new lifestyle!

“Time for me to return to the village and log out.”

Jiang Fei started his journey back to the Beginner’s Village. Along the way, he opened his inventory window and started organizing his items.

“Hmm... So let’s throw these to the ring as leveling fodder (TL NOTE: items to be sacrificed). It has to be food, or else it would not work. Random ETC items would be gone and still won’t contribute to the ring’s level. I should sell them to NPCs.”

He organized the items, one at a time, scrutinizing each of them. One particularly item caught his attention. A bottle containing clear, red liquid.

“Hey hey... There’s a red potion here. I don’t think I would be using them, anytime soon. Monsters in the Beginner’s Village are just too weak. Best put them in the blue slots. Don’t want the ring gulping them down!”

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“Ding! Attention players. The server will shut down in 30 seconds. Please make proper preparations before the server disconnects! Today’s session is about to come to an end!”

As Jiang Fei was just finished tidying his inventory and tossing trash at the NPC, the system called out again.

“*Shiiiiing*”

After the same white light flashed by, Jiang Fei found himself lying flat on his bed. Everything had returned to normal.

“Was I dreaming, or was I really playing the game?”

Jiang Fei scratched his head as he asked himself the same question when he had first entered the game. He lifted his hands up and gazed upon the silvery metal around his finger.

Woosh

A faint, white light flashed from the ring.

“What the-!”

Jiang Fei bolted upright, fully alert.

“It is a dream! It has to be!”

Baffled by what just happened, Jiang Fei could not think of any other explanation. When the light flashed, he had clearly felt the contents of the ring’s inventory! It felt just like he had in the game!

Jiang Fei reached to his thighs hesitantly.

“This better work!” cried Jiang Fei as he pinched himself hard.

“OWWWWWW!”

It worked. He was not dreaming. Definitely not dreaming. The pain was hell on earth. Wait, why would he even subject himself to such pain? Why the heck did he apply that much force...

“Sh*t! Damn! This is real! This is real!”

He could only accept the reality that had been shoved right in his face. The ring was with him, and he knew that the ring’s inventory was real! The only difference here was how the game had separated it into two — red and blue. In reality, he could only access the 18 blue slots. One of those slots contained the small red potion.

“Ah Fei? What’s wrong?”

A concerned voice rang from outside Jiang Fei’s room. It was his mother.

“Nothing, mom! It’s just a bad dream.” Jiang Fei gave a lousy excuse after screaming and bicycle kicking the air in pain. It must have sounded like any mother’s worst fears.

“If you say so. It’s time for you to get out of bed! Hurry up and eat your breakfast.”

His mother switched to strict nagging Asian Mom mode as soon as she knew that was nothing going on with Jiang Fei.

“Yeah yeah...” Jiang Fei replied nonchalantly. As a high school student, it was rough morning after rough morning. With the game, everyone in the game would be up at 6am sharp with a full night’s sleep! Oversleeping would be a thing of the past!

Jiang Fei got up of his bed, more curious about the ring than ever. He had felt the ring’s in-game functions, in this real world! Would its contents manifest themselves in reality as well?

As he reached this hypothesis, Jiang Fei concentrated on the ring and focused on the little red potion in the inventory. It may merely be a common Health Points Potion, but what would it look like in the real world?

“Come out!” Jiang Fei cried, hoping for the best. He was so nervous that his heart could have jumped right out of his mouth! If he could take it out, he would no longer be an average high school student! What if he could take out some god-like equipment from the game and wield them in the real world? He would be stronger than that crappy Superman who couldn’t even tell inside from out when donning his underpants!

Woosh

A faint blue light flashed, and Jiang Fei felt the sensation of a cold glass in his hand.

“I did it! It actually appeared!” Excited, Jiang Fei reached for his thigh and pinched himself again!

“WOAH! OW!”

“Brother Glider?! What’s wrong!”

“NOTHING MOM! I STUBBED MY TOE!”

“Ah Fei! You’re in high school now! Why are you still so careless?”

“Won’t happen again!”

This time, his screams were so loud that his mother had shouted back at him with equal intensity. Surprisingly, she bought his plausible but lazy excuse without much fuss.

“I’m invincible! INVINCIBLE!” Jiang Fei screamed into his pillow.

“Right! Right! I guess that I should place this back...” Jiang Fei tried to summon the inventory window out, but failed. Things were not as simple as it was before. The ring’s inventory was not as easy to use in reality. Items could only be moved between the game’s inventory. That and withdrawal from the ring’s inventory in the real world. There was no way for Jiang Fei to deposit the item back without the game’s inventory!

“Crap... Might as well put it in this bag first.” Jiang Fei gave up almost immediately. Since the potion could almost fit in a palm; like a small female perfume, he then placed it in his bag.

After a quick breakfast, Jiang Fei got dressed and went to school.

“Brother Fei! Oh man, you’ve missed out on the game! Dawn Break is so realistic! It’s too real! Man... I can’t even tell the difference between the real world and the game!”

“Yea-”

“I’m not done! After playing for the entire night, I woke up feeling refreshed! I won’t have to worried about being late ever again!”

Jiang Fei’s best friend, Zhao Feng immediately sauntered up to him and bragged about the game when Jiang Fei entered the classroom.

“It’s a shame that your dad won’t allow you to play the game. Imagine both of us playing together... We could be dominating the entire server! Dude! I reached Level 6 yesterday! I’m going to pump all my energy to play tonight and leave Beginner’s Village as soon as possible...” Zhao Feng’s rambling continued, on without showing any signs of stopping.

“Haha. Is that right...” Jiang Fei laughed as he listened to his friend.

Even though Zhao Feng was his best friend, he hesitated telling him about the mystery ring. That guy was infamous for his loud mouth. There was no secret he could hold, no tales he would not tell. If he knew about the ring, the whole world would soon know about it. Jiang Fei knew of its power. He knew what would happen if others got to know about the ring. He might not be able to protect it on his own. He could not afford to let any living soul know about it.

The rest of the day, his body sat in class, while his mind continued drifting around the ring. He was extremely excited. After a single night, that ring had already produced a red potion from a video game! That was just one night. Just how much change could the ring bring to his life?

“Brother Fei, I think you should persuade your dad again when you’re back home. Our families are practically the same... Financially, I don’t see any reason why your dad would not agree. Anyhow, it’s all on you now!”

Zhao Feng was still rambling on about the game long after the school bells rang.