

NEW EDEN: LIVE TO PLAY, PLAY TO LIVE

Chapter 8 Way Of The Blade

After logging back in, Astaroth felt fresh and well-rested. Ready to tackle this day of rough physical exertion.

He was sure that the sword training would not be for the weak, and he was still only level three.

He walked away from his alcove, and towards the barracks in the village. From there came the sounds of swords hitting wooden dummies at a steady rhythm.

It sounded less chaotic than the previous day, probably because of the trainer orchestrating this training. He walked into the courtyard quietly and started observing the training.

He saw a rack to the side with short swords on it and walked to it. He inspected the swords.

Basic Training Short Sword (1h):

Grade: Common

Attack Power: 1

Durability: 10/10

Description: A short sword that is good only for training.

'Meh' He thought, as he grabbed one.

The sword had a certain weight to it. He had never held a real sword in his life, but he was expecting the game to take away that realism.

He knew some swords were too heavy for him, for example, the trainer's long sword, but he thought that was because of a stat requirement. Now he guessed that there were hidden stat requirements for each weapon.

Luckily for him, the weight was barely an inconvenience, so he could still wield it. He started copying the movements the surrounding trainees were performing.

At first, his moves were sloppy. But Astaroth was good at one thing, and that was rote execution. He worked in a factory, so everything was always the same.

He kept doing the movements for hours, getting better as time went by. By lunchtime, everyone stopped training and went inside the barracks to grab some food.

He, on the other side, kept slashing and sweeping. The reason for that was the notification he had gotten just a short while back.

Ding!

Your training has borne fruit. Strength +1

He even swapped swords and grabbed a longsword on another rack. He of course inspected it first.

Basic Training Longsword(1h/2h):

Grade: Common

Attack Power: 1(1h)/2(2h)

Durability: 10/10

Description: A longsword that is good only for training.

He went back to performing the moves and had a little more trouble, seeing as the sword was heavier and longer. But he focused on the task and eventually went back to doing the moves fluidly.

After another few hours, he heard another notification.

Ding!

You have learned 'Basic Sword Training!

'Yes!' He thought.

'Maybe if I keep at it, I'll unlock the next levels.'

And so, he got back to training. But it was not long before he saw the trainer walking toward him.

"How are you today, sir?" Astaroth said, lowering his sword and bowing his head.

"I'm doing a lot better, thank you." The trainer responded.

"I see you came to train and that you have grasped the basics. Good. But you won't learn anything more from just practicing these moves. Come with me." He added, beckoning him with his hand, as he walked to the center of the court.

Astaroth could see that the dirt there was a little more compact. Like feet had stomped there more often, and with more force.

He quickly understood why, as the trainer drew his sword and turned to him. The trainer only smiled a little, before getting into combat position and becoming serious.

'We're gonna spar' Astaroth immediately understood.

He lowered his posture, hoping that he could learn something new from this.

His hopes were quickly dashed. Instead of calling this a spar, one might call it a beating.

The trainer dashed at him at speeds high enough for him to only be a blur. Astaroth had just enough instinct to block the sword slash coming at him from the left.

But the result was as expected. So much force came at him that when the swords collided, he lost grip on his own and it flew away from his hand.

That also threw him off balance, and he ended up wide open.

The trainer grinned at him savagely before kicking him in the chest, sending him flying into the nearby wall. When Astaroth hit the wall, all the air left his body, and he crumpled to the ground.

After a few seconds of gasping to catch his breath, he spat out blood.

From the corner of his eyes, he saw his HP bar had dropped by half! Was the trainer trying to kill him?!

"That hurt!" He growled as he got up.

"That was for disobeying me yesterday." The trainer said, a smirk on his face.

"Now, grab your sword. We aren't done." He added.

Astaroth did as he was told and grabbed his sword. This scene happened a few more times, with only the violence toning down a bit.

They spared for a few hours if this could even be called sparring until Astaroth was black and blue and unable to bring his sword up any longer.

"Okay, we've trained enough for the day. Go wash up and rest. I expect you to be here tomorrow again, young man." The trainer said to Astaroth, before walking into the barracks.

People around him were giving him pitying looks as they went back to training. The poor lad would go through hell for a while until he got good or got dead, they thought to themselves.

Astaroth, though, was not in the least discouraged. He got another notification that washed his bitterness away.

Ding!

Your training has borne fruit. Constitution +1

He might not be leveling for now, but at least he still got something productive done. He walked back to the river to wash up and then walked to his alcove. As he did, he looked up his status screen again.

Status:

Name: Astaroth

Race: Ash Elf

Level: 3 (30/60)

Stats:

HP: 90/90 MP: 180/180 Stamina: 100

Mana Regen: 1/second in combat, 5/second out of combat

Strength: 4 Agility: 3 Constitution: 4

Intelligence: 3 Wisdom: 3

Attack Power Str: 20 Attack Power Agi: 15 Magic Attack Power: 15 Healing Power: 15

Luck: 0 (Stat unaffected by Level up and free points)

Available stat points: 2

Available skill points: 2

Physical Condition: Normal

Mental Condition: Normal

Equipped gear:

Beginner clothes

He tried tapping each attribute to see what they did.

Strength: 1=5 Strength-based weapons damage, affects force (+2.5kg/level)(Base=25kg)

Agility: 1=5 Agi-based weapons damage, affects speed (+0.25m/level)

Constitution: 1=10/25/50/75/100 HP, 0.1% Physical resistances/point (Poison, Bleed, Stuns included) (Lvls 10/20/30/40/50)

Intelligence: 1=5/10/15/20/25MP, 0.1% Magic resistances/point (Elemental types), 5 Magic Damage(Lvls 10/20/30/40/50)

Wisdom: 1=5/10/15/20/25MP, 0.1% Mental resistances/point (Fear, Confused, etc), 5 Healing Power

He distributed the free attribute points he had. One in wisdom, and one in intelligence.

His stats changed.

Status:

Name: Astaroth

Race: Ash Elf

Level: 3 (30/60)

Stats:

HP: 90/90 MP: 190/190 Stamina: 100

Mana Regen: 1/second in combat, 5/second out of combat

Strength: 4 Agility: 3 Constitution: 4

Intelligence: 4 Wisdom: 4

Attack Power Str: 20 Attack Power Agi: 15 Magic Attack Power: 20 Healing Power: 20

Luck: 0 (Stat unaffected by Level up and free points)

Available stat points: 0

Available skill points: 2

Physical Condition: Normal

Mental Condition: Normal

Passive abilities: Mana Lobe Lvl1, Mana Control Lvl2, Perfect Mana Sense, Mana Breathing Lvl1, Body Cleansing Lvl1, ???

Equipped gear:

Beginner clothes

Skills: Propel, Ignite, Mana Siphon

Once in his alcove, Astaroth practiced his mana control. He wanted to have greater control over it because it would help him greatly if he ever got to cast magic.

He fully used his 'Perfect Mana Sense' and started manipulating the surrounding mana. Moving it, making shapes out of it, breathing it in, and expelling it.

He even tried compressing it. But that was a whole other game.

The more he tried compressing the mana in front of him, the more he drained his mana.

He deduced that to control ambient mana; he was using his own to coerce it into action. An idea came to him then.

He gathered a ball of ambient mana in his hand. Then he started pushing on it with his own mana, trying to compress it. It was working!

Since his mana was purer than the ambient mana, it was denser and could press down on the ambient mana with more ease. The little ball of condensed mana floated in front of him for a bit before he let it disperse.

He then tried out something else. He pulled in ambient mana and attached it to his body.

He kept it there and then started pushing out his own mana into it from beneath, trying to condense it from under, while holding it from outside with his will.

It took him many tries, as his concentration slipped up and he would lose control over certain parts of the ambient mana, leaking out his own.

But after a while, he achieved what he was trying. And just like he hoped.

Ding!

You have learned the spell 'Mana Skin'

He quickly opened his skill list and tapped the new spell to read its description.

Mana Skin: You condense mana over your body, forming a second skin of pure mana. Reduce damage taken by 10%, also has a 20% chance of repelling a glancing blow. Base mana cost: 50 (Mana cost and damage reduction scale with how compressed you make the layer)

Seeing the second part of the description, he tried pumping more mana into it, only for the skin to shatter.

"I guess that's the best I can do for now, huh?" He grumbled.

"Oh well. It will do for now." He added.

He thought of something else next. If he could coat his skin with mana, shouldn't he be able to do the same with objects?

He got up and ran out of his alcove. He scrambled around, looking for a branch, or anything that could do a makeshift sword.

He quickly spotted a snapped-off tree branch and picked it up. He ran back to his alcove.

The people outside saw him and looked at him weirdly but went back to what they were doing.

He practiced for another couple of hours, to no avail. He was sure it was doable, but he felt like something was eluding him.

He gave up for the day and went to bed. He was exhausted.

He logged off again to repeat his routine. Eat, shower, and then rest, dreaming of a day when he would stand head and shoulders over everyone.

He then logged back in for the last time of the weekend.