

Just call me Thor #Chapter 6: SSS grade material - Read

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Chapter 6: SSS grade material

The golden orb emitted a tempting glow.

[A skull of Cerberus, but it's chicken-flavored]

Mike reached out, and as the golden light slowly faded, a skull the size of a soccer ball floated

in mid-air, crystal clear like amber, except it was colored in red, yellow, and blue.

"Special material, huh?" The skull landed in Mike's palm, sending a warm sensation throughout his body.

"Special Material: Cerberus Skull (SSS grade)

Effects: Can be used in crafting equipment, items, etc.

When carried, Strength +100, Constitution +100, Mana Recovery Speed +500%."

"An SSS-grade material!" Mike hadn't expected that just carrying this material would bring such a huge boost to his attributes!

"If I could turn it into a staff, it would be at least SS-grade equipment!" Mike stashed the skull in his backpack. This was probably the biggest score of the trip.

The supreme being [Morpheus] had once slain Cerberus, earning an SSS-grade rating in the newbie instance, causing quite a stir at the time. Thinking of this, Mike felt a surge of pride. He had done the same thing as Morpheus!

Supreme being-those two words carried a lot of weight. No, wait! Mike turned and looked towards the opening in the central stone wall, his eyes burning with fervor. He could do even more than a supreme being!

The hidden level of the newbie instance!

"Although I don't know what lies ahead, I've come this far already." Mike walked back to the opening, ready to continue exploring. But first, there were some minor nuisances to deal with.

Due to that bolt of lightning was so shocking, the bats were literally petrified, clinging to the wall, too scared to move.

Swoosh, swoosh, swoosh- Bats kept falling from the sky, struggling for a moment after hitting the ground before dying. They were scared to death.

Ten vampire bats, plus one mutant bat, in front of Mike, were as fragile as paper mache! Since Mike had already reached level 10, and the vampire bats were only levels 2-4, they couldn't provide him with any experience.

Thus, Mike only collected a bunch of copper coins.

He glanced at his attribute panel, and compared to when he first entered the Tower of Truth, Mike's stats had nearly sextupled! His health points had also shot up to 1800!

Of course, this included the extra 100 Constitution from the Cerberus skull, which added 1000 points to his life. You gotta know, leveling up and boosting attributes inside the Tower of Truth is no walk in the park!

The stats Mike now boasted were something many level 20 or 30 participants could only dream of! Plus, any boost he got here would sync up with the real world!

For Mike, it was just one night's work, but his physical condition had improved six to seven times over! It was almost too wild to believe, yet it was happening right before his eyes!

Mike closed his attribute panel and started tallying up his loot.

He had taken down 20 Cave Giant Rats, netting 60 copper coins, and 10 vampire bats, bagging another 90 copper coins, plus 2 silver coins from the mutant bat. All in all, Mike had 3 silver coins and 50 copper coins.

In the Tower of Truth, there were three types of currency: gold, silver, and copper, all in a decimal system.

10,000 copper coins equal 100 silver coins, which equal 1 gold coin. And 1 gold coin is worth \$1,000.

So, after a hard day's monster slaying, Mike had made a grand total of... 35 bucks. In today's pricey America, 35 dollars might only buy a box of condoms..

After counting his current spoils, Mike once again stood at the entrance to the hidden level. He hadn't been slacking off in the meantime; he had started stacking up [Charge Up] again!

Judging from his one-hit wonder with Cerberus, [Charge Up] was nothing short of a miracle move. Once stacked high enough, it was unstoppable!

The passage of the hidden level was pitch black, impossible to see anything. Mike tore a torch from the wall of the previous passage and lit up the area in front of him.

[No danger ahead, scan complete!]

With the reassurance from [Eye of Truth], Mike felt a bit more at ease, but he remained on high alert.

In the dark corridor, Mike cautiously moved forward. "Feels like I'm heading downward!"

He realized that the passage he was in was sloping downwards.

"The newbie instance is at the bottom of the Tower of Truth."

"If I'm going down, could it be... there's a Level Zero?!"

The idea nagged at Mike, unshakable. The Tower of Truth was shrouded in mystery, and despite three centuries of human research, its secrets remained largely undeciphered. Guided by the flickering torch, Mike had trekked a considerable distance, stacking up his Charge Up so many times he'd lost count. Suddenly, a pungent smell assaulted his nostrils.

"What the ?!"

"Sulfur? Have I stumbled into an underground lava pit?!" Mike wondered aloud, his guess seemingly confirmed as a wave of heat slammed into him.

Whoosh-

The sudden blast of hot air was so fierce it snuffed out the torch in Mike's hand.

Snap-

The sole source of light vanished, leaving only faint sparks that cast a very weak glow.

Darkness enveloped Mike.

The corridor fell into an eerie silence...

But the darkness lasted less than a second.

Mike's vision brightened again.

[How could an SSS-tier talent not include night vision?]

Mike couldn't help but roll his eyes.

You could've mentioned the night vision earlier, instead of letting me wander around with a

torch for ages. This talent isn't so shabby after all!

[Say that one more time, why don't you?!]

Clearly, the Eye of Truth wasn't pleased with Mike's underestimation.

With the Eye of Truth activated, Mike sped up considerably. His vision was crystal clear, missing no detail. Moreover, the Eye of Truth helpfully displayed a distance:

[Remaining: 5.6

miles]

"The corridor is this long?" Mike was astonished. He had already walked a great distance, yet nearly 6 miles still lay ahead.

"Better pick up the pace!" Mike started to run, his movements as fluid as a cheetah's, speeding through the corridor.

His physical condition was already top-notch among his peers, and after the enhancements from the Tower of Truth, his running speed was phenomenal. Moreover, the previous battles had helped Mike adapt even better to his new physical capabilities.

What was more astonishing was that after running nearly 5 miles, Mike wasn't out of breath,

nor did he break a sweat.

"This is incredible!"

Mike's understanding of the Tower of Truth had always been purely academic, something he'd describe as textbook-level. Only now, feeling the changes firsthand, did he truly appreciate the magic of the Tower of Truth.

Most importantly, all the enhancements Mike was enjoying could be synced 100% with reality!

200 meters from the endpoint, Mike slowed down, gripping his staff, ready for battle.

150 meters... 100 meters... 50 meters...

Closer, ever closer!

Finally, Mike stopped in front of a massive bronze door.

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The bronze door was engraved with mysterious and arcane patterns that seemed to hold some hidden secrets. Mike scrutinized the design, memorizing the entire pattern in his mind.

[This is a trace left by an indescribable entity of terror, proof of its existence]

[Continue observing for 10 seconds, and you will be mentally contaminated by an entity from the void]

[10,9,8.....]

The Eye of Truth provided a countdown warning.

Just as the countdown reached the last second, Mike shifted his gaze to ensure his safety. The surrounding sulfur smell was choking, and the temperature was terrifyingly high, nearly at the human limit.

[Place your hand on the bronze door, and you've completed the hidden level. Easy parkour, right?]

"That easy?" Mike frowned, feeling something might be off.

The designer of the hidden level had placed a powerful boss like Cerberus at the beginning. Yet, at the end, there were no monsters?

Where's the boss? Where's the reward?

Mike was all geared up for Charge Up, but nothing happened. What a letdown!

"Triggering the hidden level, a total of about 6 miles of underground passage, and this hidden level is just too easy?"

Mike quickly figured out where the problem lay. "It's Cerberus!"

A light bulb went off in his head, connecting all the dots.

"The content of the hidden level was actually to run 5.6 miles under the pursuit of Cerberus, reaching the final bronze door!"

"In other words, this was a life-and-death escape route, not some easy parkour!"

However, for Mike, the most difficult task had been dealt with first!

Cerberus was barely released when Mike mercilessly obliterated it, turning it into a pile of ash.

Even its skull now lay quietly in Mike's backpack!

Cerberus, meant to be the hunter, was taken down by Mike like a mere slime.

How do you even explain that?

Mike's method of clearing the level was truly unprecedented.

"If it were anyone else, even if they triggered the hidden level, their chances would be slim to none of surviving Cerberus's pursuit!"

After understanding the true nature of the hidden level, Mike felt much of his confusion dissipate. He looked around to make sure there was nothing worth taking before he could rest easy.

Following the prompt, Mike placed his palm on the bronze door. A blue light emanated slowly from his palm, spreading throughout his body.

The Core of Truth crystal he had seen before now hovered in front of him. A notification sounded in Mike's ear:

"Newbie Instance-hidden level, cleared!"

"Calculating clearance score...."

"Score calculation complete!"

"...."

Almost simultaneously, the same notification echoed in the ears of everyone in the Tower of Truth!

"Congratulations to participant [Thor] for achieving an SSS rating in the Newbie Instance!"

The moment the announcement was received, people's hearts jolted.

Before they could even express their shock,

A new Tower of Truth announcement swept across the screens again!

"Congratulations to participant [Thor] for achieving an SSS rating in the Newbie Instance-hidden level!"

"

All public channels fell into a deathly silence!

Not even a single word was spoken in the channels!

The entire Tower of Truth, even the whole world, fell into silence.

Only silence, only speechlessness, could express their feelings at this moment!

Hidden level?

What hidden level?

The Tower of Truth had been studied by humanity for three hundred years since its arrival, even during the hardest times, the research never stopped!

How come no one ever mentioned a hidden level?!

Countless questions surged in people's minds.

These questions exploded with immense energy, becoming the focal point of discussion on

all social platforms!

"What is a hidden level?"

"What are the hidden rewards?!"

All questions eventually converged into one: "Who the heck is Thor?!"

Right now, the world's eyes are on Thor!

Two Tower of Truth announcements have sent shockwaves through humanity, Earth, and

even the Abyssal Plane.

"SSS-level talent has emerged, initiating the Dawn Plan..."

"Issuing a call to arms for Battle Lords, all registered Battle Lords must report to the

designated location immediately!"

"The Abyssal Plane is entering a level two combat readiness state..."

...

Thor, by merely achieving an SSS rating in the Newbie Instance, has stirred up a storm like a

butterfly flapping its wings!

Of course, all this is temporarily irrelevant to Mike.

He just cleared the Newbie Instance.

After the Tower of Truth's announcement, a generous reward lay before Mike!

"SSS-level clearance of the Newbie Instance, reward: All attributes +50, Luck +1, gold coins +100,000, Trade Secret Realm Pass!"

"SSS-level clearance of the Newbie Instance, reward: One special job change opportunity!"

"SSS-level clearance of the hidden level, reward: [Blessing of Truth]!"

From the dazzling announcements, Mike found the real benefits that were implemented.

"100,000 gold coins?! That's like a hundred million dollars?"

Seeing such a large sum of money, Mike was also somewhat shocked.

A hundred million! What's that mean? You could buy 2 million deluxe \$50 burgers!

This vast wealth was beyond ordinary comprehension, even Mike took a few seconds to calm

his emotions.

Before today, he only had two thousand dollars in his bank account, a six-digit password protecting a four-digit savings.

Wealth skyrocketing by fifty thousand times, enough for a normal person to spend for ten

lifetimes, seemed somewhat surreal.

But!

100,000 gold coins were just the least impressive part of this reward!

"All attributes +50, Luck +1... The rewards for an SSS-level clearance are really generous, no

wonder supreme beings rise so quickly."

Mike mused.

The current supreme beings of humanity were all SSS-level clearers of the Newbie Instance.

Their growth was like cheating in a game, shooting up like a rocket!

Now, having achieved an SSS-level clearance himself, Mike somewhat understood the journey

of his predecessors.

High base attributes, increased Luck, 100,000 starting gold coins, and one special job change

opportunity!

Their starting points were not on the same level as ordinary participants!

A golden light descended, appearing before Mike, occasionally flashing with lightning.

[Stormweaver (Lightning)-One job change opportunity]

[Upon use, change to the hidden class Stormweaver, automatically gain Lightning Specialization, all Lightning spell effects +100%, mana consumption -50%!]

[Stormweaver Class template rating: SSS.] [Man, what are you hesitating for, go for it!]

Just call me Thor #Chapter 8: Blessing of Truth - Read Just call me Thor Chapter 8: Blessing of Truth

Chapter 8: Blessing of Truth

The advantages of the Stormweaver class were crystal clear under the Eye of Truth's guidance.

Once the orb was in his possession, blue lightning flickered and danced at Mike's fingertips, quickly spreading a tingling sensation throughout his body.

"Job change successful!"

Meanwhile, on Twitter Trends and Top Stories, six out of the top ten were about Thor!

Whether it was the Tower of Truth, the online world, or real life, Thor was the most mentioned word.

After the job change, a new attribute panel appeared before Mike:

ID: Thor

Talent: Eye of Truth (SSS-level)

Level: 10

Class: Stormweaver (Lightning)

HP: 3600/3600

MP: 1800/1800

Strength: 126 (+100)

Intelligence: 145

Spirit: 135

Agility: 124

Constitution: 131 (+100)

Luck: 11

Equipment: Novice Staff

Skills: Lightning Arrow, Blessing of Lightning, Charge Up, Thunderclap Strike

Status: Lightning Affinity, Lightning Specialization

Due to the job change, Mike's attributes had slightly increased, each by about 20 to 30 points. What baffled Mike the most was that, as a mage, his Strength and Constitution were higher than his Intelligence and Spirit!

What kind of mage was this? A melee invincible mage swinging a big red stick at anyone who came close?

Mike had to accept the reality.

After becoming a Stormweaver (Lightning), Mike gained a new skill [Thunderclap Strike] and a new status [Lightning Specialization].

"[Thunderclap Strike (Lv1)]: Summons a Thunderclap Strike from the sky, hitting the enemy and dealing $(200+2*\text{Intelligence})$ Lightning damage. When the enemy's health is below 30%, it deals true damage instead.

Each hit with Thunderclap Strike permanently increases the base Lightning damage of this skill by 5 points. Enemies hit by Thunderclap Strike are 100% slowed and randomly receive a negative buff.

Mana cost: 200 points

Cooldown: 2s

Mike's Intelligence attribute is 145, so $200+145*2=490$.

With the 100% bonus from Lightning Specialization, a single Thunderclap Strike can deal 980 Lightning damage!

"No wonder it's an SSS-level hidden class!"

After reading the description of Thunderclap Strike, Mike was curious for a moment. This skill not only had high damage and a short cooldown but also had significant growth potential. Each hit on an enemy permanently increased the damage by 5 points!

Mike looked around, unable to find a target to test his new power, and he was incredibly curious, almost wishing he could strike himself with a Thunderclap Strike!

"Cool it, cool it!" Mike muttered to himself, trying to contain his excitement.

The effects of [Thunderclap Strike] and [Lightning Specialization] perfectly matched the SSS-level class template-genuine quality!

This also meant that Mike's growth rate and potential had just leveled up!

"What other goodies do I have?" Mike wondered, tucking away the attribute panel and shifting his focus to the other rewards.

Besides the attribute boosts and the class change, he had also been awarded a [Trade Secret Realm Pass] and a [Blessing of Truth].

The Trade Secret Realm Pass was a golden card, about the size of a regular credit card, unadorned with any patterns or markings. It simply read, "[This pass grants entry to the Trade Secret Realm]."

"Trade Secret Realm Pass?" Mike racked his brain for any related information.

"According to the lore, it's one of the Tower of Truth's special neutral zones, accessible with either a [temporary pass] or a [permanent pass]. Once inside, everyone's appearance and aura are concealed, represented only by a random identifier."

Looking again at the golden card, Mike's eyes gleamed with excitement. This was a hot ticket item! Even a temporary Trade Secret Realm Pass could fetch a million bucks on the open market!

The pass in Mike's hand was a permanent, unlimited-use card-its value was off the charts! Even major powers, with Battle Lords at their helm, might not possess such a

high-level pass! Pocketing the golden card carefully, Mike planned a future visit to the Trade Secret Realm. Having cleared the novice instance and leveled up to 10, it was time to upgrade his gear. Plus, he needed to gather some materials and items for his upcoming explorations.

Mike then turned his attention to the last reward: "Blessing of Truth?"

"[Blessed by the Tower of Truth, the chosen one will have their rating increased by one grade every time they clear an instance or ascend a level in the Tower of Truth.]"

"Cool!" The significance of this blessing exceeded Mike's expectations.

Without a doubt, all the rewards he had received so far paled in comparison to the [Blessing of Truth]!

A permanent grade boost! What does that even mean?

If Mike could nail a perfect run, that's an SSS rating. With the [Blessing of Truth], that would bump him up to SSSS-a rating that even surpasses the Tower of Truth's own limits!

With this blessing, Mike's growth rate would blow everyone else out of the water!

"No wonder this is the reward for acing the hidden level with an SSS rating!" Mike thought to himself. "The three supreme beings who rose to prominence among humans only cleared the novice instance at SSS level. None of them triggered the hidden level!"

"That means, the [Blessing of Truth] is mine alone!" In other words, Mike's growth rate, potential, and even his limits could potentially surpass those of the seasoned supreme beings!

Of course, this was all theoretical for now!

Mike was well aware that if he revealed his true identity now, a demon god from the Abyssal

Plane could snuff him out in a heartbeat!

A dead genius is worth less than a living rat!

Surviving, realizing his potential, and becoming a new supreme being-that was Mike's top

priority!

Putting away the description of the Blessing of Truth, Mike calmed his emotions. "My first foray into the Tower of Truth was just the novice instance. The other areas of the Tower are off-limits for now."

Mike stared at the golden pass in his palm, deep in thought. "Should I check out the Trade

Secret Realm today?"

"Is there a risk of blowing my cover?" he wondered.

"According to the textbook, there shouldn't be. Besides, if I want to get stronger, I need resources, and the Trade Secret Realm Pass is a must-visit!"

Mike made up his mind. Better sooner than later!

He pressed his thumb on the pass, and a golden glow filled his vision, enveloping him completely.

A long string of numbers and letters flashed in his mind-his identifier in the Trade Secret Realm Pass.

The next moment, the golden light faded, and Mike found himself tucked away in a corner of

a bustling market.

The street wasn't exactly spacious, packed with people shoulder to shoulder. Stalls lined both

sides, displaying all sorts of glittering treasures, while vendors shouted their wares, creating

a lively atmosphere.

"Secret news! Secret news! The Defense Headquarters has issued Order Number Twenty-Six,

calling all Battle Lords to report immediately!"

"Today's newsletter, get an inside look at Thor's journey to power!"

"Recruiting Battle Chiefs level warriors, must have at least an A-level talent. We're forming a

loyal followers' league for Thor!"

Mike was baffled. What's with all the Thor talk? Nine out of ten conversations in the Trade Secret Realm Pass seemed to revolve around him.

Before he could gather his thoughts, an enthusiastic voice rang out. "Bro, new face, huh? You

new here?"

Mike turned to see a green-skinned goblin standing beside him, striking up a conversation. Mike nodded and asked curiously, "How did you know I'm new?"

"I've never seen your identifier before, and I know everyone who frequents the Trade Secret

Realm Pass! Plus, you haven't morphed your appearance; that's typical newbie behavior."

Morphed appearance?

Mike turned and caught his reflection in a mirror, seeing himself as a gray cloud with occasional flashes of lightning.

"Here in the Trade Secret Realm Pass, everyone's identity is kept secret. Your voice, appearance, fingerprints, even your soul's energy are all masked!" the goblin explained enthusiastically.

"Just picture a form in your mind, and your appearance will change accordingly." Following the goblin's advice, Mike concentrated, and the cloud quickly swirled and condensed into a humanoid shape made of clouds.

"Forgot to introduce myself-I'm a trade broker at [Mystic Market], just call me Foreskin," the goblin said, handing Mike a business card with his Trade Secret Realm Pass identifier.

"Anything you need to buy or sell, you can come to us at [Mystic Market]. Newcomers get a

2% discount!"

Mystic Market.

Mike mentally noted the name and nodded at the goblin. "Thanks, I'm just looking around."

"No problem, you can message by identifier in the Trade Secret Realm Pass if you have any questions," Foreskin said, his service attitude impeccable. "But remember, some information comes with a price!"

Just call me Thor #Chapter 9: Hidden advancement conditions - Read Just call me Thor Chapter 9: Hidden advancement conditions

Chapter 9: Hidden advancement conditions

After parting ways with Foreskin, Mike wandered aimlessly through the Trade Secret Realm, his ears bombarded with shouts from all sides.

"Team up for the 59th floor of the Tower of Truth exploration! Veteran Battle Lords leading the way, hurry up!"

"Abyssal Planes level mission, cleanse a space corrupted by a demon god, generous reward!"

"Reward for information on the demon cult increased by 30%! Bounty for high-ranking demon god followers doubled!"

The items in the Trade Secret Realm Pass were way out of Mike's league; he was just there for the spectacle. The mainstream items traded here started at millions of gold coins!

Mike had just over 100,000 gold coins in his pocket, not even enough to buy scraps.

After roaming for a solid hour, Mike finally stopped and stood in a corner of the trading market. Piecing together snippets of conversations he'd overheard, he began to grasp the current situation.

"Because of my triple-S rank in clearing the hidden instance, the Defense Headquarters has triggered a level two alert?" Mike was astonished, not expecting his actions to cause such a stir.

A level two alert meant the consumption of resources beyond measure. The Defense Headquarters, manned by three supreme beings, was akin to a massive federal organization. Mike also learned that the Defense Headquarters had always had a plan for nurturing the 'fourth supreme being'. They were waiting for a seedling who could clear a triple-S rank newbie instance, the birth of a new supreme being for humanity.

Thus, as soon as news of Mike's achievement broke, the formidable war machine of the Defense Headquarters sprang into action, gears turning at full speed. The pre-established contingency plan was executed methodically.

Increasing educational resources, summoning all Battle Lords to stand guard, eradicating Earth's demon cult followers... All these measures were taken with one goal in mind-to provide a healthy growth environment for Thor.

"The Defense Headquarters hasn't made a big show of searching for my identity. There might be moves behind the scenes, but they're being very restrained on the surface."

Mike nodded to himself, understanding the rationale behind their actions. If they directly sought out 'Thor', exposing Mike's identity while he was still in a very vulnerable stage, it would bring endless trouble. The demon gods would never sit idly by as humanity raised another supreme being.

The three supreme beings had already brought humanity and the Abyssal Plane to a stalemate, even allowing humanity to organize small-scale counterattacks. Once Thor also ascends to a supreme being, it would spell doom for the Abyssal Plane!

The only choice, when Thor fully matures, is to nip him in the bud.

The Defense Headquarters' response is to erase all potential threats as much as possible. As for Thor's own growth, given his triple-S rank clearance of the newbie instance, there's nothing to worry about!

Understanding all this, Mike felt a lot more at ease. With no immediate risk of his identity being exposed, Mike refocused on his own growth.

He came to the Trade Secret Realm specifically to exchange resources for faster development.

"All this stuff is way too pricey, and even if I could afford it, I don't meet the level requirements!" Mike scanned the area, pulled out the business card he had from before, and sent a message to Foreskin.

"Happy to serve you!" The green-skinned goblin popped up in front of Mike once again.

Mike, catching him off guard, asked, "How happy?"

Foreskin was stumped... he had no comeback for that!

"Alright, I... ahem... I have a friend," Mike started with a common opener. Anything inconvenient could be pinned on a 'friend'. Creating friends out of thin air!

"My friend's junior just awakened his talent today, entered the Tower of Truth, and cleared the newbie instance."

Foreskin quickly caught on to what Mike meant, "You want to get some equipment and items for this junior of yours, right? Let me find something; here's a commonly used recommendation list!"

Goblin Foreskin handed over a list, clearly prepared in advance. Mike glanced at it and frowned.

"Why is it all D-grade, E-grade equipment?" The enhancements from these pieces of equipment were negligible, practically junk. Mike would be better off fighting bare-handed than using this trash.

Foreskin patiently explained, "For newbie participants, the most important thing is to level up. Equipment at this stage is just consumable! Once you level up, then it makes more sense to consider higher-quality equipment."

Mike nodded, understanding the logic.

We are got to consider the bang for your buck, right? A level 10 S-grade staff without any growth potential is worse than a level 50 common staff!

He pressed on, "Got any staffs that can grow?"

Back when he received the newbie gift pack, Mike had the chance to pick a growable A-grade staff, but he had to painfully let it go for a better reward later on.

"There are some, but..." Foreskin hesitated, then pulled out another list. "Staffs with growth potential usually have hidden conditions for advancement. Each time you complete an advancement, it refreshes with new hidden conditions! So, you see... these pieces of equipment are kind of a mixed bag."

He added, "And they're pricey!"

"Upgradable equipment that's both expensive and a mixed bag," Foreskin said earnestly.

At [Mystic Market], they pride themselves on fairness. Those who can enter the Trade Secret Realm are either rich or noble. Even a temporary pass costs a million bucks a pop! How could an ordinary Joe afford that?

Therefore, Foreskin preferred doing business that builds over time rather than making a quick buck.

Curious like a newbie, Mike asked, "Since the conditions for upgrading equipment are hidden, isn't there any way to find them out?"

"There is a way," Foreskin explained patiently. "Master-level blacksmiths can pay a price to reveal the current conditions for advancement."

"But a master-level blacksmith charges a fortune, way over ten million! And once the equipment advances, the conditions change again. You can't possibly hire a master blacksmith to appraise it every single time, right?"

Foreskin's points made sense.

Upgradable equipment had two main features: 1. Hidden advancement conditions; 2. Refreshed conditions after each advancement.

Essentially, upgradable equipment was like a money pit, requiring massive resources to develop. It was a high-stakes gamble, often resulting in a total loss.

However, these features were practically irrelevant in front of Mike. He could see right through the advancement conditions with just a glance! Even the maximum number of times an item could be upgraded and its future upgrade path couldn't escape Mike's eyesight.

Remembering something, Foreskin added, "Oh, and there's another way to identify advancement conditions. There's an S-grade talent called [Sharp Eye] that can identify the conditions of equipment advancement with a 50% success rate, limited to three times a day."

Foreskin didn't elaborate much on S-grade talents, as it involved confidential information. If Mike wanted to know more, it would cost extra.

Mike just chuckled after hearing this. The gap between S-grade and SSS-grade talents was

simply too vast!

After hearing all this, Mike still stuck to his original interest. "Let's take a look at the upgradable equipment anyway. Maybe I'll find something that catches my eye." "Here's the list," Foreskin said, handing it over. "All these items can be upgraded at least

three times!"

**Just call me Thor #Chapter 10: Force of Nature - Read
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Chapter 10: Force of Nature

Mike's eyes scanned the equipment list, with notes appearing next to each item name.

[Shadow Slave, upgradable 3 times, reaches level 60 (A-grade quality) when fully upgraded!]

[Soul Wailer, upgradable 6 times, reaches level 80 (S-grade quality) when fully upgraded!]

[...]

While checking the notes, Mike didn't forget to compare the prices of these items.

[Shadow Slave] 300,000 gold coins, [Soul Wailer] 150,000 gold coins...

From a potential standpoint, the latter was clearly stronger, yet it was only half the price of the former. The reason was that [Shadow Slave] had a solid base panel and was suitable for dark mages, while [Soul Wailer] leaned towards the soul class, a less popular choice.

Of course, they had one thing in common-Mike couldn't afford either of them.

Mike only had 100,000 gold coins in his pocket, which was worth over a hundred million dollars, yet he couldn't afford a single upgradable staff!

As Mike browsed through the staffs, Foreskin suddenly exclaimed, "The head honchos at Mystic Market just sent out a notice-all lower-tier equipment starts at 20% off!"

"Really? That sounds too good to be true," Mike said, skeptical that this might be some kind of sales gimmick.

"Bro, you must to thank Thor," Foreskin said with a sigh. "These discounts are cast wide to provide resources for the new generation. Thor is definitely one of them and will enjoy these benefits too!"

Clearly, Mystic Market wouldn't drop prices without a reason; the Defense Headquarters must be involved somehow.

The Soul Wailer, originally priced at 150,000, would be 120,000 with the discount. Mike figured he could scrape together enough to afford it.

"More news just in!" Foreskin's eyes bulged, almost screaming in disbelief, "Mage-class equipment is selling at 50% off, but only to mages under level 30, and each mage can only enjoy this discount once!"

Half off!

"It's madness! Complete madness!" Foreskin shook his head, baffled by the crazy world. "One guy, Thor, and he's causing all this stir!"

"By your words, I should really be thanking this Thor guy-he's saving me a ton of money," Mike said, unable to suppress a laugh.

At half off, Mike could consider any equipment priced under 200,000 gold coins!

That's like handing Mike a cool 100,000 gold coins-100 million dollars!

"We really owe 'Thor' big time," Mike agreed.

Foreskin, who hadn't seen such a scene before, mused, "According to the previous job transfer announcement, Thor is a mage class, which is why we're seeing these crazy half-off deals!"

"If I ever meet Thor, I owe him a dinner," Mike chimed in earnestly.

And he wasn't kidding-Mike was metaphorically 'feeding' Thor every day with his gratitude.

With the half-off discount, Mike suddenly had a lot more options!

Eventually, from hundreds of pieces of equipment, Mike picked out a staff made from thunderstruck wood: [Force of Nature].

The attributes of the Force of Nature looked pretty standard.

However, it was a rare dual-element staff, [Lightning] and [Wood/Nature], enhancing magic skills of both types significantly and also featured upgradable properties. It was listed at a high price of 180,000 gold coins.

"180,000, after the discount, 90,000 gold coins."

Mike expertly haggled with the seller,

"Come on, give me a break, it's not made of gold."

"This is worth more than gold!"

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Finally, after about fifteen minutes of back-and-forth, Foreskin couldn't hold out and gave Mike another break.

"After the discount, 80,000 gold coins, and I'll throw in 60 Tower of Truth returners, 5 level- 10 gold scrolls, and 12 level-15 combat golems!"

"Deal!"

Mike was pleased with the price.

Even without counting the freebies, just the leftover 10,000 gold coins were worth millions- enough to buy a ton of hot dogs, right?

After they verbally agreed, Foreskin immediately messaged Mystic Market to have the goods delivered.

An 80,000 gold coin deal wasn't something he closed every day!

Most importantly, the upgradable equipment Mike bought was from a less popular, slow-selling category. Most people wouldn't waste their money on such equipment.

Mystic Market was stuck with a bunch of equipment that couldn't be converted into liquid assets, which was a real pain!

This deal was a win-win for both parties.

While waiting for his equipment to arrive, Mike decided to pick Foreskin's brain about some Trade Secret Realm stuff. As long as it wasn't top secret, Foreskin was like an open book.

"So, you mentioned before that Mystic Market isn't just for buying, you can consign stuff too?" Mike asked, feigning casual interest.

"Absolutely, fair to all ages, and no fees whatsoever!" Foreskin boasted, "Even if you go anonymous, we don't charge a dime!"

"Now that's a unicorn-no fees at all," Mike squinted slightly, sensing that Mystic Market must have some heavy hitters backing it, maybe even a whiff of [Defense Headquarters]! Otherwise, where would those hefty discounts come from?

With that thought, Mike opened his mouth again, "I have a friend..."

"Cough, cough."

Foreskin couldn't help but roll his eyes internally.

Just say it's you, man. What's with this 'I have a friend' every day?

What, is your special talent [Making Friends Out of Thin Air]?

"He's got something he wants to consign anonymously."

Foreskin nodded, easy peasy.

"What's the item, and what's the asking price?"

"A rock."

Mike pulled out a stone from his backpack, a key item for unlocking a hidden level in the newbie instance!

With the help of [Eye of Truth], a note floated above the stone:

[This is just an ordinary rock. What, you want to sell it for a fortune? Who's gonna pay big

bucks for a lousy rock?]

"Can this rock be sold?" Mike asked, holding up the stone.

Seeing the rock, Foreskin was also a bit taken aback.

"It can be sold, but... does it have any special features?"

Mike: "It has the special feature of being sold for a lot."

Foreskin: ...

"What method of sale do you want to use?"

"Anonymous auction, highest bidder within the time limit gets it."

"Alright, what should we set the starting bid at? 5,000 gold coins?"

Five thousand gold coins-that was the limit of Foreskin's imagination.

An ordinary rock fetching 5,000 gold coins would be a story to tell for a lifetime!

It's like selling a rock for the price of a nuclear-powered aircraft carrier!

Mike pondered, "Let's set the starting bid at 1 million gold coins."

To the average Joe, it's just a plain rock. Even under the scrutiny of [Eye of Truth], it's nothing

special.

But Mike knew better; this was the trigger item for the hidden level in the newbie instance, a testament to the human race's first successful completion of the newbie stage! That's the added value on this rock.

As for whether anyone would be willing to shell out such a hefty sum for a commemorative stone, Mike wasn't sure. But hey, consigning items was free, so if it didn't sell, no skin off his back. And if it did sell? Mike would be laughing all the way to the bank!

"Alright, I'll set that up for you. One month time limit, okay?" Foreskin confirmed some details and finally placed the stone in the [Mystic Market] auction house.

Finally, Mike's long-awaited [Force of Nature] arrived.

"We need to create a trade contract under the witness of a secret realm sprite, ensuring that the buyer of this staff is a mage under level 30, and it's their first time enjoying a 50% discount at Mystic Market..." After signing several contracts, Foreskin summoned a secret realm sprite, and the deal was sealed.

The slightly cumbersome procedure ensured that each transaction was as fair and just as possible. Once everything was settled, [Force of Nature] was officially handed over to Mike.

"Have a great life, and if you need anything, feel free to connect with me anytime!" Foreskin watched as Mike left the Trade Secret Realm.

A merchant familiar with him called out, "Foreskin, where did you find that guy willing to spend big bucks on upgradable equipment?"

Upgradable equipment was a nightmare for all merchants-expensive and hard to sell.

"Who knows," Foreskin shrugged, explaining, "Suppose he can identify the conditions for

upgrading?"

"Suppose my future son-in-law turns out to be Thor?"

"Stop dreaming! Such good fortune doesn't just fall into your lap!"

"Foreskin, you made a killing today, how about buying everyone a round?"