

**Maybe, Kinda**  
**Sunday – 09.04.62**

I HAD A NOTEBOOK FULL OF IDEAS AND A NUMBER OF NEW runes, both related to Bone and Golem Creation. But I couldn't actually do anything about it right now. No, I had to be fucking responsible and start looking for a guild.

Which wouldn't normally be a bad thing, except it's boring. I mean, who likes looking through dozens of employment contracts and comparing assumed average earnings statements from different guilds, while also comparing them to third-party sources? Sometimes I hate my parents for making sure I understood how to do this kind of research.

From what I could see, I had no chance of making enough money to pay for living expenses until I passed through level 10. Most sources suggested getting a part-time job for this part, even most guilds suggested a part-time job. The rest mentioned this or that strategy to save up.

I wasn't sure about getting a job in my situation. I needed a lot of free time to work on discovering tons of runes and then figuring out what they did just to get a basic. And as I now had a proper primary job, getting a second one would be nearly impossible. Most magical jobs could be used to do something on the side, even if they were combat-focused. But other than using undead to haul boxes, I've got nothing.

Unfortunately, that wasn't likely to be possible. The basic information I'd gotten from my new skills and perk

suggested that all undead are created from corpses. Actually, all golems are created from *something*, but the relative cheapness of undead means corpses. I couldn't see many employers being comfortable with that situation.

On the other hand, the only way I would have a chance to practice was in a dungeon. So I only really had one path forward. All I could feel was excitement though, I was finally getting a chance to hunt in a dungeon! I'm sure there would be an argument, or three, with my parents. But they couldn't actually argue their way out of this. The biggest problem I could think of is convincing them this wasn't intended. Which is hardly an issue anyways.

Unfortunately, Golem Creation doesn't just focus on new runes but the basics of a couple elemental knots. Fuck my life! Worse, the Bone Walker perk says the same, there are a couple of elemental knots that need to be tied to the created minions. I'd done some test casting, and even with 5 levels in Golem Creation, 17 in Mana Control, and 18 in Mana Channel, I still couldn't fucking make the knots! This was going to require the kind of practice I absolutely hated, repeating the same actions over and over and over until I figured out what was going wrong. And no hint as to how to improve!

The curse of being an adult was having to focus on practical things. I guess I needed to make sure I could grow in strength and level as quickly as possible. Otherwise I wouldn't be able to support myself. I guess I could continue going to classes part-time. But there was no college degree for dungeon diving, so the best I could do is business, and that was largely believed to be a wasted degree these days. Most parents and even high schools taught basic business and money skills sufficient for all but

the most ambitious these days. In other words, full-time dungeon diving was the only way forward for me.

My phone rang, and I picked it up absently.

"Have you figured out a plan?" Mother's voice rang through even before I could speak a greeting.

"Give me a day or seven," I replied.

"Sorry, can't help but worry about it. Have you considered picking up the Enchanter job? I know it's not what you wanted, but it would let you make enough money to continue to pursue the Healer job for years."

"Yeah. But enchanting is just so boring. Doesn't make it a bad job, but I'll never be enthusiastic about it."

Mom chuckled on the other side of the line. "That wasn't the only reason I called. We've worked out that we can bring you back."

"Don't you dare," I snapped. "I don't need to know your finances to know that will require crushing your new business."

There was a pause. "Not a big deal, honey, if you need it."

I sighed. "Yes, it's a big deal, and I'll make sure I won't need it."

Having spoken to her recently, we shared a few pleasantries. I had to tell Mom multiple times not to do anything drastic right now. *No, don't sell your business. Please.* And we finally got off. I ground my teeth. I felt like a terrible daughter for not telling Mom about the Necromancer job. But I had every reason to believe that Mom would instantly sell everything to get a ticket on a caravan back. I needed to be able to say I had it covered.

Stretching, I looked at the list of possibilities, information, and advice I'd put together on the guilds. Several were eliminated right off the bat. Unfortunately the Adventurers' Guild was one of those; as cool as it would be to join the oldest guild in existence, the way their guild was structured limited their usefulness for me. Basically the Adventurers' Guild used tiered pay grades based on time in the guild and experience in the dungeons. A set up that would mean that gaining levels wasn't the only thing I needed to get the more valuable jobs.

Besides, they had a Necromancer already, one who flew to different cities as needed, so I didn't know how good of a deal I would get. A backup might be helpful but certainly wouldn't be considered worth a large payout.

Of those guilds not eliminated, it was mostly a result of a lack of information. I didn't know enough to actually decide one way or another, which meant I'd have to call them. Ahh, I hated this part. So I was going to get lunch. It was a little early, but whatever.

While eating lunch, I found that most of the guilds I'd marked as "likely" had an applications process you could start online, so I didn't have to call them at all! Hell yes, social anxiety for the win! Or something anyways.

That out of the way, I started reading up on advice for making offensive spells from non-offensive jobs. Several of these ideas looked like they would actually be applicable, and I pulled out my Necromancer Ideas notebook to take some notes. At the same time, my phone rang.

"Hello," I asked distractedly.

“Hello, my name is Sandy with the Sanctified Devils,” a feminine voice answered on the other side. “I was calling to update you on your application to join the guild and ask some extra questions for our process here in Charleston.”

My head snapped up. Of course the first returned call would be the largest guild on my list. “Ah. Sorry, I was a bit distracted. So, how are things going?” As soon as the words left my mouth I knew my response sounded stupid.

“Very well, thank you. As for your application, as I am sure you’re aware, Necromancers are a high value job, and this means processing your application will take a little longer than normal. From what I understand, the added time is to ensure we can properly assist you in the transition from normal life to guild member safely.”

“Sounds reasonable. Though how ‘safe’ can this be with monsters and dungeons involved?” I asked.

“Relatively safe I guess would be more appropriate, but we aren’t supposed to admit that,” Sandy said in a conspiratorial voice. “Our initial plans help insure that 80% more of our new members make it to level 10 and remain an active part of the diving industry, compared to other guilds. This is because of our focus on the proper handling of stress.”

That sounds reasonable, I believe I’ve seen people suggest that as important as well. Sounds good. What can you tell me about my application?”

“Mostly that we understand the limited availability of information regarding Necromancers and are currently looking for the best way to handle that. I understand that there is some possibility of getting runes from our industry partner Integrated Arcane Solutions. IAS is a company specializing in enchanted goods, so it is highly

likely they have come across a number of important runes for Necromancy.”

I leaned back. Yes, that was true. I already knew that the Flesh and Bone runic languages overlapped with the Healer job. That’s where I got my initial knowledge of those languages after all. I could definitely see them overlapping with known enchantments. Bones might be used in gear that “enhances the wearer’s durability” or something, and flesh could be used in healing enchanted gear, poison protection, and fatigue reduction. Or any number of things.

“I hadn’t thought of that,” I said slowly. Did that make me sound stupid? “Not a bad place to look for runes.”

“Yes. But such runes are kept as proprietary secrets, given the value of some of the products. Thus I have to know if you would be willing to sign a NDA surrounding the runes you gained from our database. It will likely remain binding even after you leave our employment,” Sandy said.

“If I join you guys, yes. Those runes will be too useful to skip some research,” I answered eagerly.

“Good. Now, so we can check the database and have actual numbers for you when we present the package and NDA, what Knowledge skills are considered ‘Necromancer’ knowledge?”

“Well, I’m level 1 and I wasn’t trying for Necromancer, so what I know for certain is Runic Magic: Bones, Flesh, and Poison, as well as Golem Creation,” I answered.

There was a brief pause as I assume Sandy made notes. “Well, that’s good to hear. Poison is a bit of a surprise. I assume that is Runic Magic, followed by Poison in parentheses?”

“Yup.”

“I don’t know if that one will be in the database, as it wasn’t one of the ones I had as a possibility.”

“Not surprised, I’ve almost exclusively researched runic magic and have never heard of a poison language before picking it up with the job yesterday.”

“I see.” Sandy was quiet for a second. “Alright, one last question. What is your primary job?”

“Necromancer.” I was pretty sure that was on the application, did she think I’d lied to her?

“No, I mean the first one you got.”

“Necromancer. I was attempting for the Healer job, that’s how I ended up with levels in Bone and Flesh magic and accidentally stumbled on a poison spell which triggered the Necromancer job,” I explained. Why would she need to ask that again?

“I see. That’s a very unusual situation.” I could hear the doubt in Sandy’s voice. “I am going to need confirmation of both your age and job, I’m sorry about that. Could you make it down to the local office today?” Sandy asked.

“Sure. Could you set up a tour of the facilities or something? I have other applications out and would like as many points of comparison as possible.”

“Actually, that’s not a bad idea. Let me look at the schedule. I have a couple officers who might actually be able to do that. If I can put you on hold, I can make a call or two and line something up for today.”

“Go right ahead.”