

Seeing the two of them getting ready to exit the game, I gave a small nod, turning towards Sarah. "There's one last question before I go. Something that might determine whether or not I'm able to get any of your games in the near future."

"Oh?" Sarah blinked, her eyes going wide. "I could donate you the funds to get the first one free, if you'd like."

"Pretend she didn't say that!" A female human across the room spoke up. "Sarah, we're just barely making a profit already. Can we really afford to loan out enough for a free copy to another Keeper?"

"Oh, it's not so bad as that." Sarah smiled towards the human, a slightly pudgy girl with brown hair. "I know Dale can pay us back over time. And since we would be getting the royalties from it, he'd only have to pay back ninety percent, right?"

The companion looked like she wanted to protest, holding her mouth open for several long moments before simply sighing, shaking her head. Seeing that, Sarah turned back to face me. "Anyways, what is the question you wanted to ask?"

I chuckled slightly at the exchange between the two of them. "I remember that the only options I saw on the market to enter a game world like this was through the 'Information Age' in a tech tree. Is there a magical equivalent? Out of my worlds, most of them are more magically inclined, whereas the last one is just stepping into the information age. I think it'd be a while before they manage to catch up enough to get anything like that."

Sarah had a rather difficult expression at that. "Well, there *is* a magical equivalent, it's just... a lot more expensive. Connecting the entire world seamlessly together is one thing that technology can simply achieve far more easily than magic. If you want my advice, get the tech version, and then set their culture to focus towards it."

*So magic can't quite replace the internet yet, huh?* I mused inwardly, nodding my head. "Alright. Also, is it possible to set up a 'server' that spans multiple planes in one connected planet system? That way, the game can be played on any of my different worlds."

"Okay, now *that* I can help with." Sarah smiled wide, nodding her head. "If you have a device, magical or tech, that is able to perform planar travel like that, then it is only a matter of investing in that research a bit more. If you do so, you'll be able to create small, sustained portals between worlds. They won't be nearly as effective as the larger device, but they will be enough to run network cables through."

That sounded like a job I could give Ashley and Tubrock. One to work on the portals, and the other to draw up plans to lay out a network infrastructure through the other worlds. Maybe this

would encourage those other worlds to finally use more of Desbar's technology, rather than relying purely on their own magical advancements.

"Alright, thanks." I held my hand out to shake, ready to bid her farewell. "It was nice coming over. I'm sure that next time I visit, I'll have a lot more people with me. Especially after those two tell them about the games."

Sarah nodded, reaching her hand out to grasp mine. However, there was a mischievous look in her eyes. I didn't quite know what to make of it until I saw the window appearing in front of me, letting me know that Keeper EverLasting was wishing to give me eight thousand points. That number nearly made me stumble, my eyes going wide.

"Like I said, first one's on me. Consider it a late welcome present for joining the guild."

It took me a moment to fully register what she had said. "It won't... adjust the strength of my worlds too much, having an additional first ranked world like this, would it?"

Sarah shook her head at that. "Oh no, nothing like that. When it comes to game worlds like this, the system is a bit more lenient. Maybe if you connected it to your worlds through a different system, but with a pure game one like you're wanting, then the system only cares if the world's rank is higher than your own."

"So no second rank games." I said with a small nod, not really having a problem with that. If a first rank game already cost this much, I could only dread to imagine how much a bigger one would.

I heard the two girls coming through the door, talking excitedly as I mentally accepted the trade. "Oh Dale, you wouldn't believe how cool it is-- what did you just do?" Aurivy asked, her energetic tone quickly halted as she stared at myself and Sarah. "Did you just sell something big?" After asking that, she gasped, her hands covering her own body. "Did you sell me?!"

Thankfully, I could tell that she seemed to be joking, otherwise I might get seriously worried where her mind went. "No, I didn't sell anything. Sarah here was just giving us the funds so that we could buy one of these games ourselves when we get back."

"Oh you are my new favorite person ever!" Aurivy squealed out, running over and jumping at Sarah, wrapping her arms around the surprised Keeper. "Thank you thank you thank you! I had so much fun, even if it was short! I can't wait to try one of your finished products!"

Sarah couldn't help but laugh at the excited halfling, reaching a hand up to pat her head. "Don't thank me too soon. From what I hear, you won't be able to enjoy it just yet. One of your worlds has to get the technology unlocked, which may take a little while."

“Daaaale.” Aurivy whined, jumping down from Sarah to walk over towards me. “When we get back, can we fast forward? I promise I’ll help finish up with your Fyor project, and then help Ashley with Desbar! I’ll even pay for the Reality Virtual tech out of my share of Fyor’s points!”

I shook my head with a small sigh, reaching down and ruffling her hair. “Let’s finish up with Fyor first, and Ashley can get started with Tubrock on some other things we need to prepare. Until then... you can start looking with Udon and the others to figure out which one you want. Fair?”

“Fair!” She responded happily. “Let’s go, hurry!” She reached up to tug at my arm, pulling me towards a grinning Ryone. “I wonder what it will be this time. I think I’d be okay with a land shark after all this!”

I rolled my eyes, waving farewell to Sarah before focusing on returning home. Aurivy sounded... almost disappointed when a red door appeared along a nearby wall, silently opening into a black void. “Okay... a normal door works, too.” She ran, dragging me through the door, causing us to appear in our living room a moment later. Naturally, Ryone was only a step behind us. As she walked through, though, there was a low yell from behind her, a certain dark-skinned ura goddess being thrown through the door.

Once we were all through, the door closed, fading back into the wall as if it were never there. “So... you made a rather lucrative trip.” Terra said knowingly, having been waiting for us sprawled out on the couch. Keliop grumbled at her words, having just barely missed the couch herself.

“That’s one way to look at it.” I nodded with a small smile, walking over and giving her a quick peck on the lips. “I miss anything while I was gone?”

She purred up at me, a lazy smile falling over her face. “Nah. Everything stayed paused when you left. Though with that look Rivy’s giving me, starting to wish that I had let them keep going.”

“She’s just... very excited.” Ryone said with a small laugh. “Rivy, you go and find Udon. I’ll get Ashley and Tubrock.”

No sooner had Aurivy heard the suggestion before she vanished entirely from the room. She was most certainly *very* excited to be able to have one of these game worlds. Ryone simply let out a small giggle, bringing her hand up to cover her mouth as she walked off. Leaving myself and Terra alone in the living room after Keliop sulked her way out of the room, muttering about her fun being interrupted.

“So, what do you plan to do now?” The catgirl asked with a small grin. “I don’t think Aurivy will be able to forgive you if you go into training mode before everything is set up for this new game world. You *could* probably train the Divine Soul, but it would mean keeping things going slow enough that you don’t miss the world falling apart without you.”

I couldn't help but groan, nodding at that. I had actually been planning to do a bit more training originally after we got back from this trip, but now... It definitely felt like this would be important as well. A training environment where I could practice combat skills without any fear of death, no matter how bad I mess up. I won't be able to use it for the energy combinations, since we won't be doing a full law merger, but normal combat or technical skills could easily be trained.

"Just to confirm... if I get the Reality Virtual tech tree off the market, then it is completely safe for me as a Keeper?" This was a pretty important thing that I had to ask, since otherwise it'd all be purely for the entertainment value.

"For the most part. While logged into the game, your body will still be vulnerable at the connection point. If you are attacked out there, you could still be killed despite being logged in. There's no such thing as 'absolute protection' for a Keeper outside of the Administration Room."

"Oh? That connection thing that Sarah had in her Admin Room seemed like it'd be pretty close."

My comment made Terra grin knowingly. "There's a little flaw to that system that she didn't point out. First of all, you don't get any of your Keeper bonuses when you use it. You are forced to start from the very beginning as a normal person. Second, it can't connect to any world that is already part of the Games. Those are two major limiting factors that make it no better than a permanent installment of weakened World Hosts."

"Sure, she can 'die' when logged in like that. But would it really be worth it? No progress that she makes like that could ever carry over to her Keeper profile. And every time she dies, she has to start from scratch unless there is a respawn system in place."

I nodded my head at that. Certainly, it didn't seem to be as perfect as I had imagined. It was still quite nice, and she had admitted that it had cost a fortune by *her* standards. Meaning I'd probably be looking at at least a hundred thousand points just to get a system I'd hardly ever use. To me, it just seemed more worth it to rely on the World Hosts. I doubted that I'd ever go through three thousand of them, so it was the most cost effective option for me.

"Alright. Rivy said that she'd pay for the tech tree out of her portion of Fyor's funds. And since Sarah gave us all the points that we'll need to get one of her games, all that's left is getting there and getting a network set up to spread through all of the worlds."

I was running through various different ideas in my mind as I talked about that. Part of me wanted to consolidate all of the portal networks to the area around the Fairy Gates, but it became immediately clear that doing so was not an option. Whenever a creature from the 'outside' came through a gate, it was fired upon by a series of ki cannons. From what I had seen, druids had to come through every few weeks to fix the terrain. Placing cables there would just be asking them to be cut.

This meant that other sites had to be designated within each world as the network connections. Maybe even multiple ones for each world to act as redundancies. The internet was all about being a giant hydra, no single connection able to take down the entire thing. Might as well play to that, it may even help boost their connection speeds.