

After we ate, I went ahead and created the Sunspire Palace, a towering stone structure that glistened in the moonlight. It had stained glass windows facing both the east and west, as well as three tall towers. Various different colors of coral were interwoven to make the interior decorations, such as spiraling statues that held up a golden orb on either side of the entrance.

The main reason why I was so determined to use this palace not only in this new city, but also in Fallcry, was the special bonuses that came with the blueprint. First of all, there was an experience buff for anyone that slept in the palace, this buff lasting for twenty-four hours. Secondly, and perhaps more importantly, residents of the palace could summon Coral Guardians to defend the palace in the event of an intrusion.

I wasn't sure how strong these guardians were, admittedly. However, the blueprint was found at the bottom of a dark ocean, amidst monsters far more powerful than myself. I could at least *hope* that the guardians would be worthwhile.

Once the palace was completed, the Coral Imperial City blueprint advanced to the next stage of completion, and I was tasked with choosing the city's name. I looked at the palace, and then at the giant cliff wall just a few kilometers off to the west of the city. After a brief moment of contemplation, I named the city Sunset Isles.

Like with Fallcry, we didn't know what dungeons would be spawning in this city yet. Therefore, there was no way that we would be able to determine its name based on that information. With that said, I was satisfied with the name.

The next day, I accessed the national treasury to build a teleportation nexus in the Sunset Isles. Then, I used the King's Authority to create a portal back to Fallcry, making a second one there. However, I wasn't staying in Fallcry for long.

Once I had the teleportation points set up, I was tasked with setting the fees for transportation. These fees would naturally be a source of income for the nation, but I did not want to charge too much, given that there was no other road available. Thus, for citizens of Fallcry, I set the price to fifty silver. Meanwhile, non-citizens would need to pay five gold for travel.

Admittedly, anyone who made it this far in Chimeris would surely have five gold, but that was still an amount that could add up over time. As long as I was able to earn back the fifty platinum that I spent on the two buildings, I would be happy.

I spent the fifty silver fee to return to the Sunset Isles, and Nuoda left to return to Fallcry. Diane and Bella chose to stay, as they could continue their training with the experience buff from the Sunspire Palace. Even if they returned to Fallcry, there were only a few local monsters that they could afford to hunt.

After Nuoda left, and the rest of us were in the sitting room of the palace, Diane looked at me with a small grin, crossing her arms. "You said yesterday that you had gotten us some rewards, right?" She asked, and I blinked at the memory.

"Oh, right. I forgot," I grumbled, smacking my forehead. "I was going to give one to Nuoda before she left. Though, I'm not really sure which one she'd want."

"We have *options*?" Diane asked, her interest piqued.

"Yeah, I got quite a few rewards from when I was farming the materials for the city." As I said that, I pulled several items out of my inventory, laying them on the table.

The first item was an elegant, sea-blue dress with spiked frills around the collar, and a pearlescent glow to the fabric. "This is the Ocean Empress Gown. I only managed to get one of them. It has the effect of increased resistance to water skills, and water breathing."

The next item was a pair of pitch black boots, seemingly made of a soft leather carved with twisting patterns. "These are the Abysswalker Boots. I have... plenty of these, so I don't mind if you both want a pair. Their innate effect is to allow freedom of movement underwater."

One by one, I took out the gear from the rewards. The Sea King's Robes, the Maelstrom Cloak, the Shellbreaker Bracers, the Sailor Admiral's Coat, the Deepwave Amulet, the Merfolk Attire, and the Coral Halo Circlet. Each item had its own aquatic effect, and I had duplicates of most of them.

Diane's eyes roamed over the items, seeming to scrutinize them. I knew that it would be hard for her to be satisfied with any of these, given the theme she wanted to roleplay. None of the items I got were really any good for her image as a rogue. In the end, she selected the Deepwave Amulet, which increased the power of Water and Dark skills.

As for Bella, she took a pair of Abysswalker Boots with a smile, before looking at the dress.

"Would it be alright if I took that, too? Not for... battle or anything. I just think it might look good for formal events."

I chuckled, folding the dress and handing it to her. "Go ahead," I assured with a bright smile. "I'm obviously not going to wear it."

Diane let out a snort at that, before looking at the rest. "Same deal as before, you want me to help you get rid of the excess?"

"That's right," I confirmed, before trading her the furniture items that I had gotten as rewards. "As well as these. I'll keep the crafting materials for now, just in case. But the other rewards, I'm fine with getting rid of."

Diane nodded her head in confirmation, accepting the trade. "In that case, I'll save them for a little while. Their value will naturally surge after a week or two."

With that taken care of, I left the palace to get to work on constructing the city. I was already prepared for this project to take several days, given the sheer size of what I was working with. Having the blueprints naturally increased the speed of construction, but it was still a massive undertaking.

Thus, the next week was spent from dawn to dusk, walking the stone streets of the Sunset Isles in my 'draconic construction' form. While doing so, I continuously channeled Instant Fortifications-X into my surroundings, completing the blueprints for each building at a rapid pace.

As the days passed, the building speed became greater and greater due to my skill leveling up. On the seventh day, I could create the Seashell Cottages faster than I could walk down the road, the buildings seeming to manifest around me.

My skill eventually reached seventy-two when I was finished building. This gave me the added bonus of being able to fit an entire house inside my inventory. Not just that, I could almost fit the entire Sunspire Palace into a single inventory slot. And that was without taking the time to hollow out the interior to save space.

When I told the other two this, they were delighted. After all, this meant that they could leave their beds and other furniture in a permanent house that we would carry with us. I'd need to work on a new, permanent house for us.

Just as I was thinking that, Diane paused, looking at a window that appeared before her. "They're ready, Drake," she said, her voice turning more serious.

"They?" I asked in confusion, before my eyes widened. "Your old guild?"

"Right. They just got to Fallcry. However, Nuoda is having... issues dealing with them." Diane's tone was awkward, though I couldn't help but grow worried when I heard that.

"They're not starting any trouble, are they?"

"N-no, not that," she chuckled nervously, looking off to the side. "Fallcry doesn't have enough space to hold them all..."

I paused, taking a moment to process that. "Diane, how many people are in this guild?" I had expected a few hundred people, maybe a thousand at most. That would be enough to handle the bare essentials of the Sunset Isles. Even if the majority of the city would become a ghost town, I was prepared to put up with that since the population would grow over time.

“Let me ask Charlie for a headcount,” Diane muttered, typing out another message, before her eyes widened. “If we count the Fallen that joined them... a little over seventeen and a half thousand.”

My eyes bulged outwards, utterly gobsmacked by that number. That was nearly triple our nation’s total population at this point. That would... certainly be enough to handle the basic functions of the city, though there would still be many barren areas. “Can you have the leader come over through the teleportation nexus?”

Diane quickly nodded her head, typing out the message. “Done. He said he’s on his way. When I told him about the effects of the Tempest Tower, he seemed very eager to show up. Though, keep in mind, he’s... like me.”

It took me a moment to process what Diane meant by that. Surely, she didn’t mean that he was also stuck in a hospital. That wouldn’t be something to warn about in this context. “A... roleplayer?” I asked hesitantly, and Diane confirmed it.

“Right. The whole reason I didn’t join up with the guild this time was because they wanted to be a mage-themed guild in this game, and I wanted to play a rogue. By the time that they were big enough that they couldn’t help accepting other roles... well, at that point, you and I were already traveling together, and I was having fun like that,” she glanced off to the side as she said that, before clearing her throat. “Anyways, I’ll be heavily ‘in character’ when he’s here, and you can expect him to be acting out his own character.”

“We have a codeword for when to break character, just so we can talk normally if we really need to. If he starts to be a bit... *much*, just say the phrase, ‘real talk’. He should cut it out right away if you do that,” Diane assured, before taking a deep breath to steady herself.

The teleportation nexus wasn’t very far from the palace, so we only had to wait for a couple of minutes. By the time he arrived, Diane had slunk back behind me, her expression serious as her presence seemed to naturally dissolve.

The approaching man, however, made no attempts to hide his appearance. His dark blue robe billowed behind him with an unseen wind, lightning crackling along his eyes beneath his hood. His staff wasn’t held in his hands, but rather floated alongside him, supported by two rings of wind along its shaft.

Beneath his hood, I could make out that his hair and eyes were both pitch black, and he had a goatee adorning his face. When he stood before me, he glanced at Diane behind me before looking me in the eyes. He offered only a small nod of acknowledgement before he spoke. “You must be King Advent of Fallcry. Miss Kagemura has told me much of your exploits. I am Charles Avenborough, the Archmage of Storms and master of the Twisted Eye.”

I could already feel my eye twitching at his over-the-top acting. "Right... yes, thank you for coming. I'm sorry that I wasn't able to meet you at Fallcry. I've only just finished building this city when I heard of your arrival. And, given the... size of your entourage, I didn't want to crowd Fallcry any more than it already was."

"Quite. My apologies for any inconvenience," he said, lifting his head slightly to look at the Sunspire Palace. "This is truly a magnificent palace, King Advent. To think that such things could come as rewards from the recent event speaks highly of your own ability."

Yeah, okay, that was about as much forced flattery as I could take. In the most deadpan tone I could manage, I uttered the codeword that Diane taught me. "Real talk. *Please*. It's been a long day of work, and I don't want to have to navigate around roleplay-speak while handling such an important discussion."

Charles blinked, pulling back his hood in surprise. "You know--oh, right. Diane must have told you?" He asked, looking back at an increasingly smug-looking rogue hiding behind me. "Sorry, it's a force of habit. Really, though, this place looks great."

"Thanks," I said dryly, shaking my head. "Do you mind answering a few questions? If I'm going to be entrusting such a large city to your guild, I want to make sure that I understand at least the basics."

"Sure thing, ask whatever you need to," he said with a smile, the lightning fading from his eyes as he grabbed his staff. "Sorry for the theatrics. It's just part of the character."

"Trust me, I understand," I chuckled, briefly looking back at Diane, before turning my attention back to Charles. "If you have over fifteen thousand people, why haven't you already established your own city? You should have more than enough to do so."

Charles awkwardly scratched the back of his head. "Well, we've been going around, thinking about where to settle. Unfortunately, nobody in our guild even has a nine star trait, so we couldn't settle our own nation. And it's really hard to talk to royalty while maintaining character, but if we just break character for that conversation, that sullies the whole spirit of the roleplay to begin with."

"But you're fine talking normally with me?" I asked in confusion.

"Right. Diane trusts you enough to explain everything," he happily informed me. "And from what she's said before, you're not really bothered by the idea of roleplay itself. Especially not if you're traveling around with her. She was always one of our most hardcore roleplayers."

After he said that, he smiled at Diane. "And she told us about the king trait people can get for joining Fallcry. Since we use a lot of 'unnecessary' skills as part of our roleplay for dramatic

effect, a trait that reduces mana burden is a godsend for us. Is there anything else you'd like to know?"

"There is, yeah," I said, before gesturing to the space around us. "I get that you want to settle in Fallcry, but are you really sure? I mean, the level of monsters around here is probably too high for any active player. I could only build the city here by exploiting last week's event."

"Oh, we're *definitely* sure!" Charles' voice turned eager as he enthusiastically nodded his head. "Not to mention the free dungeons, but just the tower itself is enough to draw us here. As for the monsters? If we send enough people into the dungeons, we can win with human wave tactics. It'll cause a few losses at first, but as more people successfully gain experience in the dungeons, we'll be able to increase our earnings. In the long run, we may even be able to overtake the other big guilds with this investment."

"Also, we have some people with spatial magic, so we can still visit our old hunting grounds if we really need to. Speaking of which, though, have you confirmed the dungeons in the city yet?" When he asked this, I could only shake my head.

"Not yet. Like I said, I just finished building the city. The dungeons didn't spawn until the blueprint was completed, so I just locked them for the time being."

Charles let out a small sigh, but quickly cheered himself up. "Right, that makes sense. In that case, is there anything else that you'd like to ask? I don't want to cause any trouble for your friends over in the other city."

"That should be good. You can have everyone register their citizenship with Nuoda. That will cut the teleportation cost down to just a tenth of what you had to pay to get in. Since I doubt your spatial mages can hold a portal open long enough for that many people to get through," I smirked wryly, and Charles laughed.

"Right, that'll help. James would be *furious* if he found out we spent eight hundred platinum on transport fees when we didn't have to." My body practically froze up at his words, eyes widening. I had known that the teleportation fee would add up, but I didn't think it'd be *that* fast. Even at just a tenth of that, the buildings would have already more than made up for their own cost.

"R-right," I took a deep breath, steadying myself. "In that case, you can go ahead and get them. I'd like it if you could report on the dungeons to me when you're done investigating them." To simplify that process, I went ahead and sent a friend invite to Charles, who happily accepted it.

After accepting the invitation, however, he pulled his hood back up, the lightning returning to his eyes. He quickly entered his 'roleplay' mode, and offered a small bow. "As you wish, my King. I shall go and guide the Twisted Eye to our new home. You have my sincere gratitude for your hospitality."