

## Chapter 92: Synthesis

### Ice

#### 0th Tier

##### **[Icicle] (10/10)+ -Learned**

Launch a shard of ice that deals 200 damage

40m range

Casting Time: 1 sec

Cost: 10 es

##### **[Freeze] (10/10)+ -Learned**

Lower the temperature of 20kg of a substance by 20K

Cost: 10 es/sec

##### **[Manipulate Ice] (10/10) -Learned**

Manipulate 20kg of ice

20m radius

Cost: 10 es/sec

#### 1st Tier

##### **[Cold Resistance] (10/10) -Learned**

Reduce cold damage by 40%

##### **[Ice Spikes] (1/10)**

Cover 2m<sup>2</sup> of a surface in icicles that deal 20 damage

Cost: 10 es

Requirements: [Icicle] (1/10)

##### **[Icy Grip] (10/10) - Learned**

Alter your friction on ice to  $\pm 10\%$

Cost: 2 es/sec

**[Effusive Ice] (10/10) - Learned**

Ice freezes the area around it

Requirements: [Freeze] (10/10)

**2nd Tier**

**[Winter Born] (10/10) - Learned**

Reduce cold damage received by 40% to increase cold damage dealt by 40%

Requirements: [Cold Resistance] (10/10)

**[Ice Armour] (1/10)**

Coat yourself in a suit of ice

Cost: 2 es/sec

Requirements: [Icy Grip] (5/10)

**[Senses of the Cold] (1/10)**

Enhance your senses when ambient temperature is below 273K

Requirements: [Cold Resistance] (5/10)

Hidden Skill

[Freeze] (10/10)

**[Flash Freeze] (10/10) - Learned**

Ice skills are 100% more effective when ambient temperature is below 273K

**3rd Tier**

**[Call Hail] (1/10)**

Create a hail storm with a 40m radius

Casting Time: 10 min

200m range

Cost: 500 es

**[Hardened Ice] (10/10) -Learned**

Increase sturdiness and damage of your ice by 5%

**[Cold-Infused Conductor] (1/10)**

Ice absorbs 1% of latent essence

Cost: 100 es

Requirements: [Effusive Ice] (10/10)

**[Ice Arsenal] (1/10)**

Replicate weapons from ice

2m range

Cost: 5 es/sec

Requirements: [Ice Armour] (10/10)

**[Icicle Bombardment] (1/10)**

Drop an icicle that deals 20 damage for every metre it travels

2m range

Cost: 100 es

Requirements: [Freeze] (10/10)

**4th Tier**

**[Icy Domain] (1/10)**

Create an icy domain. Entities within the domain are dealt 20 health, stamina, and essence damage per second. Ice skills are 10% more effective within the domain

2m radius

Cost: 10 es/sec

Requirements: [Winter Born] (10/10), [Freeze] (10/10)

**[Melt into Ice] (1/10)**

Whilst wearing a suit of ice and standing on ice, melt into water to reform at another patch of ice

2m radius

Cost: 50 es

Requirements: [Ice Armour] (10/10)

#### **[Crown of Ice] (1/10)**

Don a Crown of Ice. Ice attempts to obey your will to the best of its ability

4m radius

Cost: 10 es/sec

Requirements: [Senses of the Cold] (10/10), [Ice Spikes] (10/10)

#### **[Snow Storm] (1/10)**

Create a snow storm with a 40m radius

Casting Time: 5 min

100m range

Cost: 500 es

Requirements: [Call Hail] (10/10)

“Third tier, [Icicle Bombardment]?” Riza asked, looking at Klannar’s skill tree even though he was all the way in Rensenfeld. There didn’t seem to be a distance limit on it.

“Yep,” Lefie replied, looking at her own skills.

*This shouldn’t be possible*, Riza thought. Lefie had a third tier ice skill. In fact, she *synthesised* it.

Right after the demon had died, when Lefie was freaking out a little from the height, it appeared before her; the system telling her that a new skill had been synthesised. That *she* had synthesised it.

And there it was. The last time Riza had checked the ice skills, it just wasn’t there, and it wasn’t a hidden skill either.

If Klannar wanted it, he not only had to meet the prerequisites, which Lefie also didn't meet, but he'd need to spend a skill point to do so, but Lefie got it for free.

"Just [Icicle Bombardment]? Not even [Icicle]?" Riza double and triple checked.

"Just [Icicle Bombardment]" Lefie repeated.

Riza found herself stuttering, not knowing what to say.

*So many questions. The first one, why isn't it a water skill? It was made from a zeroth tier and first tier water skill so, logically, it should be a second tier water skill, right?*

*And Lefie has [Way of Water] which means it'd be even stronger for her if it was a water skill, but it's not. It's ice.*

*Which, I suppose, makes sense as well because it was just a giant icicle.*

*But then that leads us back to the same questions regarding the ice and water skill trees, and this new development makes those questions very interesting.*

*Another question: why does it require a skill Lefie doesn't even have? I suppose [Alter Water] is the closest approximation involved in the synthesis but it makes less sense than requiring a skill from the water tree.*

*Except, skills only have skill requirements from within the same tree.*

*Just how many fucking rules and subsystems are there?*

Riza sighed heavily, the whole situation so complex.

*Let's look at [Icicle].*

*There's a way to approximate that in the water skill tree; you use [Conjure Water] and then [Alter water] to freeze an icicle-shaped bit of water and then you throw it. If you have a decent bit of strength or throwing skills, then it can travel fast enough to deal significant damage.*

*That's a possibility for how [Icicle] was synthesised.*

*But the idea of a zeroth tier skill being synthesised is insane by itself. It's implying the entire tree is made from skills created by people. If you travel to the past, fewer skills exist.*

*Eventually, you'd find the original skill, or the original skill tree. Skills that were always there and weren't invented by people.*

And then Riza remembered a conversation she had with Lefie not that long ago.

*Gun skills should exist. They don't know, because guns don't exist, but guns would qualify. This is insane to think but if I invented the gun, and then used it to kill demons, I would create gun skills. That should be true.*

*That's prime testing material. Completely new skill tree with completely new skills.*

She shook her head.

*I can think about all of this later. Right now, the corpse is rotting and I need to deal with that.*

Daven had arrived not that long ago and was already putting up walls around the site. They definitely didn't cover up the body but it would be enough to deter any wild animals or wild people from trespassing.

Riza jogged over to him, telling him to entomb the body as well, to hopefully delay decay, while he was at it. After him, it was Meren she talked to, telling her to keep an eye on Lefie and make sure she says stay.

Meren was happy to do that.

Finally, Riza grabbed Adewyn. She was the only one of the group who could actually ride a horse, and was the person who drove the cart on their way over here, but she wasn't going to be driving the cart this time.

They made their way over to where they had left the horses, attached to numerous trees in a thicket, and both climbed on top of one.

Adewyn unleashed the horse from the tree and led it away from the others before climbing on and situating herself comfortably on its back. She did it so gracefully that Riza felt embarrassed with her struggling attempt afterwards. It didn't help that the horse was so big and she was so small.

One arm went around Adewyn's waist, holding on tight, while the other held an everlight torch.

With just a few hours left in the day, there was no way they could make it to Rensenfeld before nightfall. However, with [Heal] making sure the horse never

ran out of stamina and running through the night, there was a chance of making it by sunrise, but the horse would be half-dead before then.

And then, they were off.

The horse hooves clomped along the muddy-grass before quickly diverting onto a dirt road, still filled with mud but not as bad as before.

Riza hung on tightly, savouring the warmth of Adewyn's body as they rode.

"I never expected to see the exact moment when a new skill was invented. Andrey's going to be kicking herself for missing it when she finds out," Adewyn said, making conversation.

"You knew skills were created by people?"

"Oh, sure. Nearly anyone important in the Dominion has made a skill before. That's not many people but that's exactly why it's a good qualification to have."

"Are the new skills usually in skill trees you've never touched before?" Riza asked, realising Adewyn—and, by extension, Andrey too—were amazing fonts of information just for this.

"Actually, yeah; it's a little bit strange that Lefie's water skills made an ice skill. Usually, you use fire skills to make another fire skill, or something like that."

*Fire?*

"Has anyone ever made an entire new skill tree before?" Riza had to shout over the thundering hooves and pelting rain.

"Definitely! Centuries ago, with the first people granted skills by Skaldur. They were all geniuses back then and made the majority of skills that exist today."

*Sounds like a creation story. That makes it less trustworthy as a historical fact.*

"How did it work, anyway? You just dropped a giant icicle on its head? Sounds like you used the [Icicle] skill."

"It didn't have to be ice." *It didn't have to be ice.* Something lit up inside Riza's head. *Another thing to test.* "You just need something heavy and dropped from a high height to do it. *Gravity* does the rest."

"*Gravity?* What's that?"

"The reason why things fall."

“Oh, gravity. I see. If you dropped my sword from that high up, would it have the same effect?”

Riza shook her head before realising that Adewyn couldn't see.

“It needs to be *aerodynamic* and very heavy. The heavier, the better. Its weight is what makes it so deadly.”

“So a really big sword would work?”

“I suppose,” Riza shouted, the rain somehow pouring down even heavier. It was like the skys were angry at that.

Interspersed conversation continued as the pair rode back, travelling throughout the night as Riza made sure to keep the horse filled up on stamina. There were absolutely no travellers during the night time so the lack of visibility wasn't much of a hindrance, and Adewyn was an adept rider.

When the sun started to rise, they still weren't near Rensenfeld, and the pair of them were getting tired.

Reluctantly, they decided to call it a day there, and set up the horse near some trees once more. Critters flocked around as the pair went to sleep, keeping watch during their slumber.

Sleep was uneventful, with Riza managing a healthy six hours before she woke herself up with excitement.

The following hours were spent riding a horse until, finally, Rensenfeld was in sight.

The large walls, the massive tower, the glittering wealthy district carved into the mountain itself—it was all there.

Her eyes lingered on the massive, black tower situated in the very centre. Only a couple days ago, it was a pipedream to climb it but now...

She shook her head. *Not yet. I have more important stuff to do.*

They didn't stop in Rensenfeld; in fact, they rode right past it, the horse moving from dirt to stone and back to dirt roads as they raced towards the neighbouring little forest, hiding the entrance to their next.

“This the place?” Adewyn asked, having not visited the nest in a long time. As someone who couldn't survive in fog, she had little visit to go there, especially when the alternative was the lovely Lord's Manor.



“A little further up,” Riza said, impatiently jumping off the horse and running the rest of the way, where she slid to the ground and hastily began uncovering the entrance tunnel.

“Do you want me to go down with you, or...?”

“Stay here?” I shouldn’t be too long—an hour at most, I hope.”

And, with that, Riza dropped into the ground, sliding a little before catching her feet and emerging into the upper layer of the nest, the part which previously housed Tanniya and Klannar.

She made haste, working her way through the complicated tunnel system and descending even further, using [Manipulate Air] to clear a path before she could grab a small demon critter and hook that around her neck to borrow its sight.

Demons filled the halls as she slid and squeezed past. It was tight and cramped down here, the demon bodies making the tunnel nearly unbearably hot compared to outside.

With a frustrated huff at her progress slowing and slowing and slowing, Riza suddenly realised there was no reason to move past these creatures; they were exactly what she needed.

Switching back to her own vision, a large [Intrinsic Tank] suddenly extended from her, all the fog vanishing in an instant as the demons were left dazed and confused for but a second.

And in that second, Riza used [Leech], full power and with [Distinguish Life] to target more than one.

They started dropping like flies as she alternated between the two skills, dancing over their dead bodies to find more prey to feast upon. After the first few died, she made sure to remember to use [Essential Leech] on the rest of them for those juicy stat points.

And then, it happened, for the first time in so many months.

**[Level up]**

You have gained 15 stat points and 1 skill point

Riza fell to the ground, panting, as energy subsumed her body. She felt it coursing through her veins as her muscles exploded in joy as the once-familiar feeling returned.

She could scarcely believe it; she had levelled up. A single tear dripped from her eye, falling onto the rocky ground below. A small part of her imagined this would never happen, that she'd live and die at level 29.

*Not anymore!*

Clambering back to her feet, all of her stat points nearly went into spirit before she had an important realisation.

*Only a minority of essence I regenerate is from my own spirit. The vast majority is from Nussy, and that's going to be further exacerbated with more summons that I own. My spirit will be rendered further and further irrelevant and so any chances matter less and less for me.*

*Every other stat is something that doesn't benefit from my summons, so it makes more sense to invest in them, right? If I put these stats straight into power, I'll increase my health by a noticeable amount.*

*But even power, I can gain through [Essential Leech].*

*In fact, the only stat that I can't increase through any means outside of levelling up, is essence. So, doesn't that mean essence is the best place for these stat points to go?*

Perhaps that was the case, but Riza decided to save them for now, once she wasn't so busy and could sit down and do some maths and explore other avenues. It wasn't like she was dying for more stats, anyway, so they could wait.

What couldn't wait, in fact, was her skill point.

Straight away, she navigated to the life skill tree and purchased [False Life] without even a second of hesitation.

**[False Life] (1/10) -Learned**

Raise a corpse into an undead version of itself beginning at level 2

Casting Time: 1 hour

Cost: 1 es/sec per level

Requirements: [Raise Dead] (10/10)

She stared at it for a few seconds, eyes lingering over the ‘Learned’.

*It’s finally here. I can use it.*

Quickly, she approached one of the demon corpses and laid her hands upon it.

An hour casting time was long, and being in the same tier as [Essential Leech], it was going to take a long time to level it up but it wasn’t quite as linear. The more she raised, the quicker it’d level, so she better get to it.

The skill was remarkably easy to use. In fact, it functioned exactly the same as [Raise Dead] in Riza’s mind, the only difference belonging to will and intent.

She used [Remnant Memories] as well, not only to check if that skill worked with [False life] but also to see if it could do what she hypothesised it could; break the level cap barrier.

The fatal flaw in [Raise Dead] was being unable to raise a creature higher than level 5.

The hour passed by agonisingly slowly as Riza focused throughout that entire time, watching the corpse fill out with energy beneath her.

The demon was level 8, most likely, so at level 6, it wouldn’t be at full strength, but even what little information she would have would be helpful.

And then, it happened. The demon’s legs started to twitch, its head lulling to one side, as the mouth opened and fog gradually began seeping into it.

It was alive.

Riza backed away as the demon groggily got to its feet, shaking its head as if to drive off sleep.

*It’s alive.*

Quickly, she checked its stat sheet.

<b>Name</b>	Unnamed
<b>Level</b>	6
<b>Health</b>	655/655
<b>Stamina</b>	236/236

<b>Essence</b>	56/56
<b>Power</b>	20(20)
<b>Constitution</b>	14(14)
<b>Endurance</b>	7(7)
<b>Vim</b>	9(9)
<b>Essence</b>	5(5)
<b>Spirit</b>	5(5)
<b>Health Regeneration</b>	382/day
<b>Stamina Regeneration</b>	255/day
<b>Essence Regeneration</b>	100/day

*It's actually level 6! But no boon and... no skills either, she swiftly checked. That's fine.*

*Wait a minute. Those numbers don't add up. That's too much health for no skills.*

*Unless there's a different formula at work, which could be possible. Needs more testing.*

*One down, however many more to go.*

Before she carried on, she sent a [Message] to Adewyn telling her to return to Andreyra in Rensenfeld and report what had happened—she was going to be a while.

Riza also sent a [Message] to Harold, telling him to make his way up to the human area as she needed someone who could control these demons.

And then, she waited. Not for very long at all; with [Remnant Memories] tripling the level, the cost also tripled which, in turn, divided the time needed for a level up by 3.

**[False Life] [Level up]**

*First level is the quickest, as it always is. Expected levelling there; only a couple of seconds.*

Another beast demon was next, this time, with the skill at level 12. Her hypothesis was that a summon could only be raised at the maximum level it was in life but now was the time to test it.

Hands on the body, essence flowing out of her as she visualised all the difference physiological and biological systems at play, the hour passed by quickly, and then it was alive.

Checking its stats... level 8. That confirmed her hypothesis.

Again and again, she raised the creatures. The one-hour casting time for each one meant she was getting constant level ups *during* the casting of the skill, but this had no effect as by level two, the demons were already at the highest level they could reach.

The hopeful one-hour Riza gave Adewyn was clearly her not thinking things through at all. The casting time alone meant she was down there for ages and her desire to have the skill at level ten by the time she was done meant a solid ten hours had passed before she finally collapsed from exhaustion.

She had done the maths; eleven demons were raised, with one at level six and the rest at level eight. In total, one and a half *million* essence had been consumed, and the skill was now level seven.

That may have seemed like a lot but the final three levels were going to take ten *million* more essence to complete.

It was insane, and Riza couldn't understand how she hadn't heard one of the physical skill users complain about it yet. Their skill tiers generally went up much higher than hers, so surely, they'd take an inordinate amount of time to finish?

She fell asleep before much more thinking could be done about it. All she knew, another thirty or so hours left until the skill had finished levelling.

Riza had no idea what time it was when she woke up. All she knew was that a snout of a beast demon was nudging against her incessantly, and she had to shoo it away in her tired state before clarity returned and she remembered where she was.

Time was of the essence, and the worm demon corpse wasn't going to stay there forever.

She fought her way back out of the cave system, telling Harold to do with the demons what he wished, except killing them, and sent an [Inform] to Andreyra to have Adewyn return to the forest.

Thankfully, Riza didn't have to wait very long for her knight in shining armour to show up, riding atop a beautiful chestnut horse.

Riza climbed on clumsily just like last time and held on tight as Adewyn whipped the horse into high gear.

"There's been some developments with the worm," Adewyn shouted, once they were a reasonable distance away from the city.

"What's happened?"

"A crowd of people gathered around it not long after we left. They must've seen the battle in the distance. They're still there and they're a bit unruly."

*Fuck me. I don't want to deal with that right now.*

With some pretty shitty sleep on cold, hard stone, and staying up so late, Riza felt abysmal, and the last thing she wanted was to tactfully deal with a group of people.

At least, they'd have another sleep before they arrived.

Riza filled Adewyn in on what she had done down in the nest, and she was shocked that Riza managed to do essentially nothing in ten hours. How did she manage to not die of boredom?

"You just sort of zone out after a while. Once you've done it once or twice, you get used to the feeling and don't have to think about it," She explained and chuckled slightly, realising she was describing essentially resurrection as something not that impressive or serious.

The hours passed and even with how early they set off, night had fallen long before the body of the worm had crested over the horizon.

Once more, a small fire was made and the horse tied to a tree while Riza and Adewyn camped out for the last remaining bit of time.

"So... After you raise the worm, it's going to be as powerful as when we fought it?" Adewyn asked, leaning back on her arms, watching Riza from the other side of the fire.

Her armour had been doffed, collected together in a sack sitting beside the rest of their gear and equipment. Her black hair glowed softly in the firelight.

“It should be,” Riza nodded. “But no guarantees. There could be something to the skill I’m unaware of, but it’s a tier four skill so it should be fine.”

“Right, right. And after you’ve raised it, what then? What’s the plan?”

Riza leaned forward and held her knees to her chest.

“We... use it, I suppose. Have it expand the nest under Rensenfeld. Help us find the rest of the demon nests in Toila.”

“That’s all? We can already do that with Sanders, can’t we?”

“I guess...”

In truth, Riza had gotten so excited over [False Life] that she hadn’t given much thought to anything else.

“It’s an incredibly powerful demon; there’s not many elder greater demons out there. I’m sure there’s a better use for it than a glorified work horse,” Adewyn said.

“You’re right,” Riza nodded eagerly. “I’ll come up with something better.”

“Don’t just rely on yourself. Everyone is happy to help.”

“I know.”

The night passed quickly and without incident, the pair back on the horse not too long after sunrise.

The entire ride back, Riza was brainstorming, not only uses for her soon-to-be pet worm, but also her potential.

She was going to be *level 42*. That was stupidly, insanely, unimaginably high. She was already strong but now, she was going to be even stronger?

Just the thought, the thinking, the consideration of her skills got her vibrating with giddiness. She felt *powerful*, like never before, even if the feeling merely came from possibility. Possibility in of itself, was potential.

Adewyn didn’t seem to mind Riza’s behaviour and rode in silence, letting her companion think to herself for the last leg of the journey.

And then, it appeared. A stone coffin, peaking above the horizon. And, next to it, a startling large crowd of people.

Startling perhaps to Riza, but compared to how big she knew crowds could get, this was tiny. A village festival could perhaps draw these numbers, which wasn't much when you considered the fact that multiple villages were in range of this area, and had likely seen some of the fighting that had happened.

Impressive that everyone stuck around in the pouring rain as well.

Numerous pack mules and horses were tied up along them, many looking like they belonged to merchants or frequent travellers.

Adewyn brought the horse to a halt, a little bit away from the people, but that didn't stop them from rushing towards the woman wearing bright, expensive armour and her travelling companion.

For a moment, Riza froze; new, scary people clamouring for her attention. She didn't want to deal with this, whatever this was.

But then, her mentality changed. She remembered the conversation with Adewyn, and her ruminations on her potential, as well as the worm's.

It wasn't just a glorified workhorse; it was a symbol. It *was* potential.

A surge of energy washed over Riza, an unusual confidence filling her.

Turning around on the horse, a small, foggy platform appeared beneath her foot, away from the ground.

She stepped on it, then another, then another, climbing into the air and grabbing everyone's attention now, with her ascent.

Turning around, she stood perhaps only a metre above, tall enough for everyone to see.

*Not often I'm like this, seeing over everyone in a crowd,* she chuckled to herself.

"Everyone!" She suddenly shouted, her tone far more imposing than she was aware she was capable of.

A few murmurs continued but the overwhelming volume lowered itself.

"There's been a change in management in Rensenfeld. There is a new Lord in town. Me."



There was an underwhelming reaction. Most people didn't seem to care, and that took the wind out of Riza's sails a bit, but there were still a few who seemed amazed and intrigued in that information.

"Over that hill," She pointed towards the entombed worm demon, "Is an elder greater demon that has been plaguing these lands for a while. Those shakes, those earthquakes, you have been feeling, were because of this demon." Murmurs of recognition spread quickly.

"And we," She gestured from herself and Adewyn, as well as the team currently surrounding the tomb, "Have slain it."

Riza began to walk. Arms behind her and with straight back, she tried her best to exude confidence and authority.

She took a step. A foggy platform appeared from nowhere, rapidly expanding in a blink of an eye, right before her foot collided with it.

She strode through the air, walking above the crowd as numerous eyes watched her move, hoping this little display of power made her seem omnipotent.

She walked towards the direction of the demon and then turned around, so her back was facing it.

"The Empire has been fighting a losing war!" She shouted, trying to emulate speeches from movies she had watched. A bead of sweat trickled down her head.

"These things," She gestured towards the demon, "Have been terrorising the countryside, and the Empire did nothing to stop it. In fact, they left Toila all together." Riza injected as much disdain in her tone as she could manage, and see it reflected back in the crowd.

"I've only been Lord for a matter of mere days but already," A rapid point behind her. "I've done more than the Empire could've dreamed of.

"And I will continue to do more, for I am not the Empire. I am different. I will win!" It wasn't quite a rousing speech, it didn't light the audience on fire, but people murmured and agreed and there was a positive hubbub about the crowd. It was good enough for a practice run at a speech, Riza thought.

She nodded at a job well done and turned around, walking quickly towards the worm demon. She didn't want to risk running, something she hadn't practised

yet, lest she fall over and lose all the goodwill and confidence she had just gained.

A small but stout stone wall had been erected all around the perimeter of the corpse, keeping out any people.

Within the confines of the encampment, Riza could make out a fire pit, beset on numerous sides by small, stone huts. A large building appeared to be stables of some kind, with horses peeking out from underneath as it weathered the storm.

As soon as she appeared in the air above, her group had already left what they were doing and ran out to greet her as she descended.

Lefie wasted no time in jumping onto Riza for a tight hug that was swiftly returned.

“Is it done? Are you going to raise it?” Tanniya asked eagerly, and Riza nodded slowly at her. The woman smiled, excited.

“You have [False Life]?” Lefie asked.

“I do. It’s already at level 10.” It had finished levelling right before they arrived. Riza had timed it well.

“That thing is going to be under our control?”

Right then, Adewyn came flying over the wall, carrying her horse in a very awkward but amusing way.

“Don’t worry about me. Somehow seemed to have left me by myself out there,” She said jovially, gently placing the extremely startled and scared horse on the ground, who she promptly spent the next few minutes trying to calm down.

Riza cringed a little but shook it away.

“Yes, it’s going to be under my control. Well, Tiffany’s control. It’s a demon, so it can only take orders from other demons. I’d advise you all to keep a good distance away from it.

“Lefie, Daven,” Riza pointed at the pair of them. “Keep the demon restrained. Use your ice Lefie, to make sure it doesn’t move. Daven, open up a little hole towards the head so I can make contact with it.”

As it was right now, the entirety of the corpse was hidden beneath a skin made of stone.

The pair nodded and headed towards the tomb.

“What about the crowd? Are we just going to let them watch?” Meren asked.

“I just gave a speech,” Riza said, sounding a little surprised at herself. “I want to know their reactions when they see what I’m doing.”

*If I’ve primed them enough, maybe they won’t be so virulently hateful of my ways?*

“The rest of us can keep an eye on them, make sure they won’t get out of hand?” Meren said, looking at herself, Tanniya, and Adewyn. Her eyes passed over Daven, who was still sitting around the fire, near the sleeping huts. He seemed... out of it.

*Something to tackle later.*

“Just make sure they don’t hurt each other,” Riza said, dismissing Meren.

*Now, for my pièce de résistance.*

Foggy platforms appeared before Riza again as she climbed ten metres in the air, heading straight towards the opening Daven had just excavated.

She hopped off, landing on the stone skin right beside Daven, before the hole.

“This good enough?” He asked.

“Yes. Good job. For everything. You’re amazing,” Riza said, giving him an earnest smile and receiving one in return.

He backed away, standing guard.

Riza sat on the rim of the hole and then dropped in. The skin and meat of the demon had already started to deflate from the decomposition, now sitting a good two metres below what was a form-fitting stone skin.

As soon as she fell into the tomb, the rank stench of decaying flesh hit her nostrils and she gagged and tried her very best not to vomit. It wasn’t as bad as the last time she smelt this smell, however.

*Ugh. I should not be getting used to this.*

She shook her head, trying to ignore the smell, and fell to her knees, placing both palms on the demon corpse, and, finally, activated [False Life].

**[False Life] (10/10) -Learned**

Raise a corpse into an undead version of itself beginning at level 60

Casting Time: 1 hour

Cost: 1 es/sec per level

Requirements: [Raise Dead] (10/10)

A strong, green glow emanated from where her hands were touching the corpse but it had no effect at all on illuminating anything around it.

A rush of energy left Riza, circulating around in the corpse as it got to work rebuilding the sinew that made the muscles, filling out the absent bones with collagen that hardened and rapidly formed shape.

An incredibly disproportionate brain slowly lit up with electricity as the neurons started transmitting again. It was absolutely tiny for a creature this large.

The hour started to pass as Riza did her work.

Slowly but surely, she was resurrecting this massive demon. She could even feel herself being lifted up as the muscles regained mass, the corpse inflating back to its normal size. A quick shout at Daven had him widening up the hole so she wouldn't be crushed against the ceiling.

Her head now peeked out from above the stone skin, seeing the stormy skies overhead.

*I don't know how, but this demon is going to help me figure out the weather. Two weeks of constant downpour is not normal.*

Minutes ticked by in relative silence, Riza just focusing on the essence, on the demon, on the resurrection.

And then, she was finished. The creature gave a sudden *heave* and lurched forwards, tongues lashing out and destroying the tomb that was encasing it.

Stones rapidly formed around Daven's feet as he rocketed backwards as Riza clung on dearly to the demon, the stone skin crumbling all around it as she watched the tongues whirl through the air, destroying its bindings.

A few, faint screams could be heard, but Riza didn't register them.

It reared up slightly and then... stopped. Slowly, it lowered itself to the ground and was completely and utterly still.

To her left, within the encampment, Riza saw a whitish glow cling to Tiffany who was watching the demon intently.

Quickly, Riza brought up its status.

<b>Name</b>	Unnamed
<b>Level</b>	42
<b>Health</b>	1258320/1258320
<b>Stamina</b>	758100/758100
<b>Essence</b>	265/265
<b>Power</b>	15729(15729)
<b>Constitution</b>	8420(8420)
<b>Endurance</b>	9975(9975)
<b>Vim</b>	21946(21946)
<b>Essence</b>	5(5)
<b>Spirit</b>	5(5)
<b>Health Regeneration</b>	673600/day
<b>Stamina Regeneration</b>	1667896/day
<b>Essence Regeneration</b>	265/day

*Wow. It actually was level 42.*

*These stats are insane. Is this even possible for a human to achieve this? Holy shit.*

Energy filled her. Her grip on the taut skin tightened, digging in, as Riza felt the vibrations of a living, breathing, elder greater demon beneath her, set in.

*I've done it. One hour. One hour to have a level 42 summon. Not a week, not a month, not a year, an hour.*

Her gaze rose from Tiffany to the crowd beyond. People were fleeing. Some climbed onto their horses and had already left.

But not everyone. Some still stayed. Most of them were at a respectful distance, looking like they could leave at any minute, but a few, just a few, were enthralled by the sight before them.

It wasn't great, but it wasn't as bad as it could've been. What it was, was a start.