

CHAPTER 56

The following week was probably the busiest Hal had ever been. In between enhancing his Bonecrafting and making more [Mana Anchors], [Mana Batteries], and [Mana Conduits] to go with the aforementioned two items, he was working on setting up the monster farms.

And if that wasn't enough, he was actively draining the [Magicite] he had every chance he could in order to keep his Kol'thil Level as high as possible. It had turned out that Trystal gave him a rather large [Magicite] that was already full of aether.

After Hal finally drained it, he saw how slowly it recharged. It was still better than using EXP to fuel his Sigils, but even with the clunky and cumbersome item, he couldn't use more than a few powerful ones each day. He could store the aether for later and use it when they would really count, but then his Level would lag behind.

Then there was the training with Val, Dale, and Trystal. The Silver Founder was exceptionally skilled at illusions, to the point that even Hal struggled to tell which was real.

This proved to be an excellent training method for Hal to get accustomed to his newly released essences and for the other Beastborne to slowly try out using her powers without a Khaeros.

Unlike Hal, who no longer suffered when he gained Strain, Val needed more time between each cast of her Beast Magic, but she also had wildly different essences and spells than Hal.

That could have explained it, but Hal thought that the difference was one of tolerance. Val, despite being strong, hadn't gone through what Hal did. She hadn't gone to the Abyss, suffered *Kol'thil Bleed*, regaining a Monster Core, or anything else Hal had.

The Kindred Dream had explained that the Beastborne Class was meant to function with a Monster Core. And Val didn't have one at all. Probably never did, just like Hal.

And now Val wasn't just missing a Monster Core that granted Spirit as a magical resource, but a Khaeros, too.

He desperately wanted to fix Val's missing Monster Core. It was one of the main drivers behind Hal working on his Aetherochemistry again.

Unfortunately, seeing as his Aetherochemistry had stalled at Level 10, that endeavor was going to be out of reach for some time. And that was despite the added work he was putting in alongside his training, Bonecrafting, and overseeing the rapid expansion of Brightsong.

So far, Aetherochemistry hadn't granted the usual Perks every fifth Level as he was used to. It wasn't until he reached Level 10 Aetherochemistry Skill that it gave him something he was eager to try out. It wasn't a Perk necessarily, he didn't get to choose it, but it enhanced the skill all the same.

[Combinator]

Permits the creation of Fusion Quests.

[Fusion Quests]

The Worldshard of Aldim is a pale shadow of what it once was. The Shard has changed time and time again, with each iteration weakening it further. You can recapture a fragment of its elder glory, instilling it in yourself or those you choose to Advance.

Doing so will Anchor yourself and those who you allow to undertake Fusion Quests to Aldim, enhancing its Level and Rank in the process with each successful Fusion Quest completed. The amount of Aetherochemistry Experience gained depends on the difficulty of the Fusion Quest.

Only one Fusion Quest can be ongoing at any time.

Sitting in the cottage, Hal stared at the notification again. This wasn't the first time that he had looked at it. He looked at his own Fusion Quest, the one he had stumbled upon like a blind man groping around in a room full of spinning saw blades.

And it was the sole reason he didn't have any new Perks or Levels in his other Skills despite training them so hard over the past weeks. In a way, it was lucky that he had tried his hand at Aetherochemistry soon after the failed attempt at a monster slaughterhouse.

Hal had thought he might be able to make some [Magicite] now that his Bonecrafting was higher, by mixing Aetherochemistry and Bonecrafting. While the attempts had failed, they did bring him to Level 10 Aetherochemistry and the Fusion Quests that Aetherochemistry offered.

Fusion Quest: Osseochemist

Before you can attempt to create more complex Fusion Quests, you must first enhance your Aetherochemistry and Bonecrafting. By undertaking this Fusion Quest, you will be able to combine the two Skills into a singular Class, or a new Skill. While a Class is more powerful, its requirements are also much steeper.

Obviously, Hal had chosen the Class variant. There was no use in half-measures, and above all, he wanted to get the best there was. The objectives were... staggering. He'd never seen anything require Skill Levels before. Not once.

And in order to create Osseochemist, Hal needed to sacrifice at least 10 Levels. All of them had to be from Crafting Skills. Which was why Hal spent the rest of the week in the kitchens, because his lowest crafting skill was Cooking and he reckoned that would be the easiest one to Level up in as short a time as possible.

He tried his hand at Construction again, helping out with the new cluster of cottages that were going up in a nice little area that overlooked the town hall. With their new tools the dwarves were slowed down by Hal's "help" but they allowed him to work on his own project with just one or two workers so he could gain as much Experience as possible.

By the end of the seventh day, Hal finally got the notification he had been working for all week.

Fusion Quest Complete: Osseochemist

You've fulfilled the requirements necessary to create your new Class, Osseochemist.

Objectives

- *10 Levels in any Crafting Skill (10/10).*
- *10 Levels in any Non-Crafting Skill (10/10).*
- *Bonecrafting Levels will apply bonus Levels (2).*

Rewards

- *Legendary Class Osseochemist.*
- *Bonus Levels in Osseochemist (2).*

Hal sat down and watched the golden Shardscript flow past his eyes as the Fusion Quest completed. He was grinning like a kid in a candy shop with an all-you-can-eat pass.

New Class: Osseochemist

Combining the esoteric power of an Aetherochemist and that of a Bonecrafter, an Osseochemist is a powerful crafting force the likes of which have not been seen since the time of the Balesians. Able to mix reagents and essences from both creatures and the very aether itself, this Class is a pure crafter with no explicit combat abilities. However, its ability to create is unparalleled and perhaps most expertly shown with the more esoteric Fusion Quests.

Legendary Class Trait: Will of the Stars

+100% MP | +25% MP Regen

+100% Crafting Speed | -25% CP Required

[Accretion]

With each Fusion Quest completed, you gain enhanced Crafting Speed, allowing you to create things faster and faster while simultaneously enhancing future Fusion Quests, allowing a greater degree of change to be enacted.

[Shardsoul]

By accepting and completing Fusion Quests, you are actively working to undo the damage to the Worldshard of Aldim. The Shard, weak though it is, is

not without gratitude. For every Fusion Quest completed, you will gain 1 Level in each of your Classes.

And thanks to his 2 Bonecrafting Levels obtained while undergoing the Fusion Quest, his Osseochemist started at Level 2. Though he didn't receive any Level Up notifications, he did notice the attribute points awaiting assignment.

Of the 10 points, Hal split them between Vitality and Mind, bringing both his HP and MP up.

Hal laughed out loud as he looked at his MP. All that work he had gone through just to hit 1,000 and he had just doubled it!

Likewise, his MP Regen went up from the low 300s over 400. All from that Legendary Class Trait, which was very new to him.

I thought Fabled Classes were the top of the heap?

Turned out that the Shard still had some secrets he had thought he already figured out.

[STATUS]

Hal Williams

Level: 67

Discordant Stone: 18,000 /55,000

Strain: 0/100

Wyrd: 0/100

BP: 31/35

Classes

Beastborne: 39

Oathforger: 16

Osseochemist: 2

Novice: 10

Resources

HP: 1,060 (+75)

SP: 750

MP: 2,380 (+75)

Attributes

STR: 15

VIT: 77

DEX: 15

AGI: 15

INT: 60 (+8)

MND: 95 (+8)

CHR: 65 (+23)

Regeneration

HP/hr: 177.3

SP/hr: 99.6

MP/hr: 414.8

“Two Fabled Classes and a *Legendary* one?” Hal shook his head. He couldn’t believe his luck. Of course, it had been a lot of grueling work, slaving over the stove to make various foods, working with his hands to put up another cottage and all the while knowing he was holding up the good working people of Brightsong.

He tried his best, but without an ability to gain Levels in those skills, he sucked at them just as much as he did the first time he tried to help out.

Not to mention all the training with his combat Skills that were siphoned off by the Fusion Quest. But in the end, it had been worth it.

He finally had all 3 Classes filled out.

At least those building the new cottages and weren't too bothered. Just having Hal join the crafting band granted them a band buff called [Master in the Building]. It offset his weak Construction Skill, but only just.

[Master in the Building]

-10% Material cost.

-10% CP cost.

+15% Epiphany chance.

Now he could do so much more. With double his MP, he could create more complicated and abstract Bonecrafting—

Wait, do I still have Bonecrafting?

There, staring him plainly in the face, was a complete and utter lack of Bonecrafting skill. In its place, however, was a very welcome new skill to go along with his new Class.

Osseochemistry was not only a new Skill, but it had also combined the previous Levels of his Aetherochemistry and his Bonecrafting into one massive Skill. Now it was his third highest at Level 46, behind Leadership at 58, and Beast Magic at a painstaking 49.

Hal hissed through his teeth at the implications of that. *Is there something more I can do with my Fusion Quests? Could I actually fuse other Skills together?*

It was in the name, after all, but it sounded insane.

To be able to collapse two or more skills into a singular one would be game changing. Not only would he gain Levels faster than before, but he could probably create entirely new skills.

Could he make a Founder skill out of Leadership and Persuasion? Or would it require more, like Deception and Intimidation as well?

Was there something even grander that he was missing? *I'm thinking too small, aren't I? Just a few skills combined would be great, but if I could combine them all into their relevant categories....*

It was almost too much to hope for.

The skills on Aldim were separated into five distinct categories: Survival, Combat, Magic, Crafting, and Social.

Survival contained things that, as the name suggested, were survival oriented. Stealth, Perception, the eponymous Survival, just to name a few. And for reasons Hal didn't quite grasp, that was where his Manatree and Flight skills were located.

Combat, on the other hand, was all the physical battle skills that he possessed. It held only one more skill than his Magic category did, which only had three skills, and that third one, Darkweave, was quite a pain.

It seemed to have a great amount of potential, but it reduced his MP regen by 2% per level. At its current Level 3, he had 94% of his normal MP regen and there didn't seem to be anything he could do about it.

It was doubtful that if he combined the skill with its neighbors, Enfeebling and Beast Magic, that he could improve it.

If anything, he might make it significantly worse.

Then there was Crafting, which was ruled by his newfound Osseochemistry and his older Tactician Skills, at 46 and 30 respectively.

His largest Skill branch by far was Social. That was where he had Leadership, Intimidation, Monster Handling, and all the rest. What would it even mean to combine them? Would it mean he'd only have 5 total Skills to Level up?

And what would happen to his Perks?

Hal looked at his Bonecrafting and saw all the Perks were still there. He still had the initial discovery bonus of Bonecrafting. It granted faster EXP, crafting speed, and high-quality rate as well, only it now said "Osseochemistry" instead of Bonecrafting.

So I just improved not only my Bonecrafting by giving it new Levels, but also my Aetherochemistry which is now considered 46 instead of 10? Awesome.

If he made things out of standard Aetherochemistry, he would be increasing his ability to make all the [Mana Batteries], anchors, and wires that he wanted. And the same was true of Bonecrafting.

That means the things I struggled to do with Aetherochemistry should be easy now, right? Even without the bonus from the Aetherochemistry Crafting Chamber.

It made him more than a little curious to try out the crafting chamber again, but those monsters were way too strong for him. He needed to be strong, even stronger than he currently was if he was going to stand a chance getting back to that chamber.

At least I have a goal now. That is, until Hirash shows his hand and attacks again. Trisal doesn't think he will, not so soon, but she didn't see the hatred in his eyes. Hopefully I have enough time still.