*Rampart III (25 000 points) - Improvement. **ACQUIRED***
Sun points : 130 244

Select a blueprint.

Priam held a blueprint crafted by a professional architect, watching as changes unfolded. His father's career began with drawing electrical lines and telecommunication centers, then shifted towards schools, town halls, and eventually houses. While he lacked the perfect skills to raise fortifications, Priam didn't have a wyvern hunter diploma. Yet, that hadn't stopped either of the two men from excelling.

"You've kept the location and length of the old rampart," Priam remarked.

"If I alter that, the Sun points cost will go up," explained Alain. "It's an improvement, not an extension."

His father had done the necessary research to enhance the base defenses, which was good because Priam couldn't be everywhere at once.

"Still, the height and width of the wall are increasing. There are also crenellations protecting the rampart walk and slots for turrets."

"As long as we don't move or extend the rampart, it's fine for the System."

"Great job," Priam smiled, sacrificing the blueprint at the Sun Shop.

Now, one question remained: how would the System upgrade the rampart protecting the Oasis clearing? Would little angels descend from the sky with hammers, nails, and planks, or would a flash blind Priam's view while the Concepts altered reality?

The algorithm behind the System opted for a blend of beauty and efficiency. When the change occurred, Priam was blinded by his newfound affinity for aether. A gargantuan amount of energy surrounded the rampart, summoned in a way that eluded his understanding.

"What the—"

Seeing his father and Rose step back, Priam realized everyone could see aether with the naked eye. The fluid was so concentrated that every liter of air held thousands of times the amount of aether Priam could compact in a Breath. Yet, he didn't feel endangered; the aether was perfectly controlled by the System.

Under the influence of the Seven, the energy merged with the rampart, penetrating wood, enchantments, earth, and the few stones forming the makeshift protection. The matter liquefied, changed shape, then resolidified.

An impressive wall now surrounded the clearing in a sweeping arc. Each end plunged into the river, making it challenging for any foe to enter easily. A single gate, crafted from white wood, allowed entry and exit from the base. Priam felt a sense of pride in his stronghold. The colossal rampart added a touch of grandeur to Oasis.

Another part of him analyzed the magic of the Concepts. The sublime mastery of the System had transformed energy into matter without wasting anything. Priam's new perception showcased the omnipotence of Concepts, quickening his hearts. *Is it omnipotent?*

It was one thing to know that the System had no real limit; it was another to witness a wall of wood and stone over a hundred meters long materialize before his eyes.

"Awesome!" exclaimed Rose, running toward the wall. Others followed.

The rampart now stood five meters high and three meters wide. The side facing the forest was now made of white marble veined with black. The rest of the structure was made of indestructible ebony wood, lending a certain flexibility to the design. Stairs allowed access to the wall walk, and Priam climbed them. Running his finger over the wood, he realized the System hadn't merely processed the boards used for the previous palisade; it had changed its nature.

[Identification]
[Rampart III - Silver - Tier 0] - Created by Alain Azura, Rose Williams, and improved by the Sun Shop.
A fortification a hundred and four meters long, five meters high, and three meters wide. The exterior is made of common wandering marble, treated and enchanted. The rest is made of rot-resistant common ebony wood, providing some flexibility to the structure.
Only the incessant assault of a Tier 0 Elysian Earl could damage this wall.
Active Enchantments:
Resilience (III)
Solidity (III)
Boundary (III)
Relay - Barrier (III)

Reading the description, Priam gave a faint smile. The time when he was an Earl wasn't so distant. The term "incessant assault" was vague, but it was clear the rampart could withstand a Breath.

"The material is robust enough to support more potent enchantments."

Hearing Rose's voice, Priam rode the mist to catch up with the group examining the rampart.

"What does that mean?" Priam asked.

"By buying the next blueprint, we can upgrade this wall to rank IV ourselves," explained Alain.

One reason his father had voted for the rampart was that the previous one was made of soil and cut trunks. Their origin was local: the forest surrounding Log-a-rhythm. The trees were relatively young, yielding wood too weak to withstand powerful enchantments. The lack of resilient material had forced Priam to purchase the improvement at a high cost rather than its blueprint.

"It's a fine rampart, but is it sturdy?" Hyshana asked, summoning a blade of light.

"Should be—"

Before anyone could stop her, the hoplite swung her blade against the stone. The sword exploded in a cascade of light.

The spectators remained silent as Hyshana nodded. "Not bad."

Typically hoplite...

"It can withstand assaults from an Earl," Priam informed, continuing to pace the wall walk. "Before his Tribulations, Kazuki certainly couldn't have damaged the structure."

"I love my husband, but he's only been benefiting from the System for two months. Our most formidable opponent is the Necro Envoy, who owns Mirscella's body. They're powerful enough to destroy this rampart."

Everyone winced at the hoplite's words, but no one contested.

"If the Necro Envoy could, she would have already killed us," Alain said. "I don't believe they're the type of enemy to play with their prey."

"They could just jump over the rampart," Priam grimaced, leaning over the crenellations.

Alain, Rose, and Hyshana gave him confused looks.

"What?"

"We've been brainstorming about the base defense all day. It would be really dumb not to have thought of that," Rose replied. "The fourth enchantment allows the rampart to relay the barrier surrounding Oasis."

The Land Owner theme had enabled Log-a-rhythm to create a protective dome over its entire domain. Intangible and invisible to Priam's allies, the barrier repelled enemies and served as support for certain enchantments, such as Camouflage.

"Meaning?" Priam asked. His father and Rose had nearly spent their entire Potential on researching enchantments and had questioned the Guardian of Secrets about it. He willingly confessed his incompetence in that area.

"It means that this new rampart passively creates a new barrier in front of it. No enemy will jump over the rampart before destroying the protection. Moreover, it extends beneath the ground to the nearly indestructible bedrock of the island. There are a few holes for the roots of Log-a-rhythm, but they are almost as sturdy as the rampart."

"So now we have two barriers?"

"One large, covering the entire domain, and one at the level of the rampart," Rose confirmed. "Without it, this structure would have limited usefulness."

Even without that, the walls are cool. Priam remembered his childhood building defensive walls in strategy games. There was something cathartic about being protected behind a large stone rampart. A transparent barrier didn't offer the same reassurance.

"The real advantage is that it's more resistant than the barrier at the same rank," Rose smiled.

"Should we upgrade the barrier?" Priam asked.

"Yes, and quickly at that," Hyshana grimaced. "The current barrier often fractures."

"Say no more."

Priam reopened the Sun Shop and upgraded the barrier three times.

*Protective Barrier II (10 000 points) - A protective barrier capable of covering 1 000 square meters and stopping attacks from an average Tier 0 Elysian Baron. **ACQUIRED***
*Protective Barrier III (25 000 points) - A protective barrier capable of covering 2 500 square meters and stopping attacks from an average Tier 0 Elysian Viscount. **ACQUIRED***
*Protective Barrier IV (50 000 points) - A protective barrier capable of covering 5 000 square meters and stopping attacks from an average Tier 0 Elysian Earl. **ACQUIRED***

Protective Barrier V (100 000 points) - A protective barrier capable of covering 10 000 square meters and stopping attacks from a weak Tier 0 Elysian Marquess.

Sun points: 45 244

For a moment, the dome covering Oasis revealed itself. The protection covered the sky, forming a perfect half-sphere that prevented any enemy from approaching by land or air. Thousands of new runes appeared on its surface, illuminating Oasis while absorbing the surrounding aether.

Outside, the corrupted beings threw themselves at the now-visible barrier. His connection with Log-a-rhythm allowed Priam to learn the truth: such weak attacks were inconsequential against the new barrier. The day might come when the Necromoon foot soldiers became powerful enough to breach the defenses, but it was distant.

Gradually, the barrier became invisible again, and the camouflage enchantment confused the corrupted beings. A few seconds later, only one in ten revenants still attempted to enter Oasis.

"According to Log-a-rhythm, even if they attacked every square centimeter of the barrier simultaneously, they would cause no damage," Priam said.

"What about an enemy like the necrowolf?" Rose asked, trembling. One didn't need to be an empath to see that the memory of the attack terrified the teenager.

Priam remembered the creature that had beheaded him upon his return to Elysium. Three attacks had been enough for the beast to fracture the barrier.

"It could attack all night in vain," Priam reassured. "The protection can withstand attacks from Elysian Earls, roughly equivalent to a weak Tier 2. It's as resilient as the rampart."

"Are you sure? The necrowolf killed you easily when you were just an Earl."

Priam grimaced. "The description specifies that it's calibrated for an Elysian Earl. I was a Moon Earl when I lost, and there's a difference between these two courts. Don't worry, if another one of those creatures shows its face, I'll turn it into minced meat."

Rose nodded with relief. The possibility that a single creature could devastate their base was terrifying.

"I have forty-five thousand points left to boost our defenses. Any ideas?" asked Priam.

Hyshana nodded.

"The Necromoon enhances the corrupted beings, and some are starting to see through the camouflage. If we don't address the problem, the base will disappear in a few weeks."

Priam blinked in surprise. The hoplite had delivered the shocking news in such a calm tone that he was caught off guard.

"I..."

Leaning against a crenellation, Priam massaged his temples. *Is it too much to ask for a few days of tranquility?*

"Can you explain?"

Hyshana nodded. "The necro revenants are growing stronger over time. Their strength increases, their reflexes sharpen, and their magical skeletons solidify..."

"Their senses evolve too?"

"Indeed. Some can sense the camouflage created by Log-a-rhythm. It attracts them, and, lacking a better word, I'd say they investigate. For now, it's inconsequential—we bring these mutants in and kill them—but the day will come when they all sense the ritual."

"We won't escape the event by hiding behind a single enchantment," Priam said. "We'll have to fight, kill those corrupted beings, and grow faster than them." His Marquess quality allowed him to create protections capable of repelling Marquesses, and it wasn't a coincidence. Even spending weeks farming wouldn't allow him to buy the most powerful protections. For that, he had to become a Duke, then a Prince.

The System reminded him that to keep his loved ones safe, he would have to fight.

"Is everyone in agreement to upgrade our camouflage?" A portion of his Sun points came from the tax he took on every kill from traps and turrets, so it seemed fair to vote on what to improve.

Seeing Rose, Alain, and Hyshana nod, Priam reopened the Sun Shop.

Camouflage II (10,000 points) - A camouflage enchantment covering 1,000 square meters, disrupting the senses of an average Tier 0 Elysian Viscount (Elysium standard). **ACQUIRED**

Camouflage III (25,000 points) - A camouflage enchantment covering 2,500 square meters, disrupting the senses of an average Tier 0 Elysian Earl (Elysium standard).

Sun points: 35,244

In the center of the clearing, an aether vortex entered Log-a-rhythm. The tree's leaves quivered and then rearranged themselves, forming esoteric lines. A trained eye would have spotted a giant rune. Briefly, the illusion of a forest covering Oasis appeared. Priam blinked, dispelling the mirage. Their camouflage was now more potent.

"My Greek god physique won't be drawing in the corrupted anymore," Priam quipped, striking a pose. He was well aware that his transformation into Homo Elysian had bestowed upon him exceptional proportions.

"I've seen Greek god statues, and not everything was impressive," retorted Rose, blushing as Priam raised an eyebrow.

Uncomfortable with the idea of cracking sexual jokes with a teenager, Priam struggled for a response.

"Three-quarters of them are animal corpses. I wouldn't be proud to match their beauty standard," laughed Hyshana.

Priam burst into laughter. "I deserve that," he admitted, thanking the hoplite for providing him with an exit.

Simultaneously, he realized that it must be challenging for Rose to be in a foreign world without peers her age. The hoplites were disciplined, Blueberry was in his natural element, Alain was content to have his son back, and Louis and Priam were engrossed in quests too significant to ponder anything else.

But Rose is just a teenager. *I wonder if she could connect with the youth from the tribes...*

"We'll need to upgrade the camouflage ritual to rank III," said Alain, pulling Priam's attention back to the conversation. "The enchantment is designed for a thousand square meters, and that's six times smaller than the size of Oasis. That dilutes its power: that's why the corrupted beings find us."

Hyshana shook her head. "Other Champions already know our location. The tribes likely have warriors powerful enough to see through a rank III or even IV camouflage. After all, regardless of its rank, it's a Tier 0 enchantment. Camouflage is only useful for disrupting hordes of corrupted beings."

"I agree," Priam said. "Tribe Chiefs are Tier 4. At Tier 0, only a Prince would stand a chance in a fight. Following this logic, we'd need improvements purchasable by Princes to disrupt their senses. It's currently impossible."

"How much would it cost?" asked Alain.

After analyzing the Sun Shop, Priam's system had an idea of the logic behind it. Priam couldn't spend more than five hundred thousand Sun points at once, so a Marquess was limited to rank VI. Sumstreh wanted him to become a Prince to buy an item worth five million points. That was the equivalent of rank X.

"An X-rank item should cost between five and ten million Sun points."

Everyone present widened their eyes when they heard the sum.

"If I had that many points, I wouldn't even know what to buy..." murmured Rose.

"Don't ask Blueberry. He'd buy ten million sausages at a Sun point a piece," winked Priam.

"And he'd eat them all," smiled Alain. "Now what?"

"Now, it's time to reinforce Log-a-rhythm."

*

Status:

PHYSICAL:
Strength 557
Constitution 860
Agility 552

Vitality 840
Perception 714

MENTAL:
Vivacity 505
Dexterity 587
Memory 413
Willpower 1 028
Charisma 631

META:
Meta-affinity 430
Meta-focus 350
Meta-endurance 354
Meta-perception 221
Meta-chance 230
Meta-authority 33

Potential: 5 268
Tier 0

Sun points: 35 244

[He Who Eludes Death] *charge: PRIMED.*

[Tribulation]: **Three Tribulations pending.**
Future Tribulations delayed until:
Time: 164 days 20 hours 38 minutes 30 seconds.

Next thresholds: 6 attributes > 600 / 3 attributes > 900