

CHAPTER 8:

GET EQUIPPED

Quest Updated: Initialization in the Nexus

Objectives completed: 1/3

Select starting Job (Complete)

Select starting equipment (Incomplete)

Select starting Legend (Incomplete)

You have limited time remaining to complete this Quest.

Time remaining: 14min 25s

“Little less than a quarter of an hour to choose the path I’ll be on for the rest of my life, huh?” Sam scoffed. “Sure, not like it’s *important* or anything. I’ll just treat it like a multiple-choice test and take my time until there’s only a minute left, then randomly select *anything*, yeah?”

After all, it would be better than initializing with *nothing*. Even choosing something weird like [Mop Foundation] as a weaponry skill was better than having none.

“I need a sword. No, not just a sword, but a greatsword,” Sam said, looking around for anything resembling an armory. “Where’s the starting equipment at?”

Something small and silvery fell onto a nearby platform, just one over, seemingly materialized from the air. He headed over and picked it up.

[Fighter Job Key]
(Key) (F-Class)

(☆ Primitive)

Unlocks any Primitive rarity coffer belonging to the Fighter Job, no higher than F-Class. One time use.

“Okay, I’ve got a key. That’s not exactly *equipment* now, is it? Hey butler guy, where are the chests at?” Sam asked.

“This way, sir.” Hands folded behind his back, the crystal guy zipped over to a platform a couple over with a shelf on it. He didn’t even have to bother hovering above a bridge to get there, just full-on flight.

“Must be a cushy perk of being the Crystal Butler Job,” Sam said as a joke.

“Yes, quite so, sir,” the butler said.

Shaking his head, Sam wasted no time rushing across the series of root bridges suspended over what appeared to be nothing. Clouds wouldn’t amount to much cushion for a fall.

He pointedly avoided looking down and focused ahead on the wooden shelf leaning against a freestanding medieval wall.

What furnishings this nexus place had seemed pulled out of somewhere else and plopped down, without the rest of the room included.

He scanned the small boxes lining the shelves, searching for one his key would work for.

Before him were countless coffers of the Jobs that had been available to him, and apparently some that weren’t. Sitting on the right side was a [Cleric’s Novice Set Coffer], and down below was a [Nomad’s Novice Set Coffer].

The coffers for [Fighter] were vertically lined up in the middle of the shelf. They weren’t large, roughly the size of a shoe box and

infinitely better made with iron strapping and polished dark wood, not to mention the clearly visible [Fighter] tag on the front.

Even those belonging to the same Job weren't the same. There were subtle differences in their descriptions, heavily suggesting the items within served various purposes. Exploration, adventure, protection, and more were offered.

So, depending on which one he opened with his single key, he would get a different style of starting equipment for Fighter.

Initially, he figured it'd just be a basic sword and maybe a piece of armor, but it was starting to seem like if he picked wrong, he might not get a weapon at all.

As useful as these other options were, Sam definitely did not want to end up in the middle of some monster-infested forest without a weapon in his hands.

He had some practice brawling hand to hand. Practically every kid he knew growing up went to some kind of mixed martial arts class or another. And those that couldn't afford classes—like Sam—were forced to learn quickly or else be on the receiving end.

But he didn't stick with it. Not after he discovered HEMA.

While he did try to open the Nomad one, it wouldn't budge. Not without its matching key.

“That's curious,” Sam said, eyeing the Nomad coffer. “I didn't have the option to choose that Job.”

“Maybe cause we're not from this land? I didn't get that one either,” Komachi said.

Sam shrugged. He seized the [Nomad's Novice Set Coffers] and tried to open it. He didn't want to risk using his job key on it, on the chance it would break. He needed the gear from a [Fighter] coffer no matter what.

Unsurprisingly, it didn't budge.

"Is that a clock?" Komachi asked.

Sam froze. He could hear it too, ticking away.

All too aware time was running short, Sam gathered the Fighter coffers he could find on one shelf, shoving the others out of the way.

[Fighter's Novice Set Coffers]

(Treasure Coffers) (F-Class)

(☆ Primitive VII)

A magical treasure coffer. Cannot be opened without a corresponding key. Immune to magical and mundane methods of lockpicking, scrying, and detection. Contains equipment suitable for the [Fighter] Job, focusing on balanced frontline combat.

"Dang, that's tier 7!" Komachi said.

"Yeah, but is that the rarity-tier of the items contained within, or the coffer itself?" Sam said, musing aloud. "I'm guessing it's the latter."

[Fighter's Defender Set Coffers]

(Treasure Coffers) (F-Class)

(☆ Primitive VII)

A magical treasure coffer. Cannot be opened without a corresponding key. Immune to magical and mundane methods of lockpicking, scrying, and detection. Contains equipment suitable for the [Fighter] Job, focusing heavily on defensive frontline combat.

[Fighter's Martial Set Coffers]

(Treasure Coffers) (F-Class)

(☆ Primitive VII)

A magical treasure coffer. Cannot be opened without a corresponding key. Immune to magical and mundane methods of lockpicking, scrying, and detection. Contains equipment suitable for the [Fighter] Job, focusing solely on aggressive frontline combat.

So the locks were unpickable, likely unbreakable, and he had just a single key to choose between three different load-outs.

Obviously, the first one was built to be flexible. That was good, right? Being flexible meant that Sam could change what he wanted to do on the fly, but just *how* flexible could you really be when you accounted for all the armor and equipment that he would need?

He needed at least a helmet, some greaves, a breastplate, cuisses, gauntlets, and various accessories for his joints like poleyns if they weren't included in the cuisses.

Considering the small size of the coffers... he couldn't imagine what they might contain. Unless, of course, you remembered that magic existed here, and that space was likely little more than a suggestion to whomever—or whatever—created these boxes.

Thinking back to how he wielded the [Shatterblade], Sam couldn't help but find himself gravitating towards the martial set. His stats seemed to reflect an aggressive nature, and those that [Fighter] provided were clearly designed to wage war face-to-face.

Defensive stats were nice, but at the end of the day there was no greater defense than having your enemy down before they could hurt you further.

Holding up the silvery [Fighter Job Key], Sam slid it into the keyhole and turned it in the lock with a satisfying *click*.

The other two coffers shimmered like a mirage and vanished into thin beams of light that streaked off into the sky.

Though the coffer was only the size of a shoe box, Sam had been correct about the magical aspect. It was like looking through a small rectangular window into another dimension.

There were far too many items, and they were way too big for the opening of the box. How the hell was he going to get them out of there?

“What do you think Kale will be? Fighter too?” Komachi asked, paw to her muzzle in thought.

That immediately brought Sam’s thoughts to a screeching standstill.

His friends. Hawai’i. The monsters swarming his home.

He *had* saved it, hadn’t he? Just like Islegard, it was supposed to Ascend if everything went right. Those things attacking his home would be repelled, and the people given the same opportunities he was being given right now.

Sam couldn’t help but chuckle at the thought of a little old grandma being told to select between [Fighter], [Scout], [Cleric], or [Mage]. The image certainly helped to dispel the feelings of dread he still harbored over the fate of his home.

There’s nothing I can do about that right now, he reminded himself. I don’t have time to worry. The others will be safe.

Assuming what Raiko said about the Ascension was true. But he had to be sure. The question was, how? He hadn’t seen anybody from Earth since he was pulled into that apocalyptic battle.

“Yeah... that’s right, they must be going through something similar. At least, I can hope,” Sam said, looking forward to seeing

them again. “Picking their Jobs, specializing in either melee or magic.”

Komachi gave him a hopeful look. “I think so too.”

From the coffer, Sam pulled out several items and laid them out on the stony ground. At first, he didn’t think anything would fit through the small rectangular hole, but they just... did.

He didn’t even need to force them.

The shelves weren’t large enough to hold all the items, and for reasons that escaped him, there was no table nearby, even though it would make things so much easier.

In the end, Sam didn’t bother to voice his complaints. Not after he saw the loot he had in front of him.

[Initiate Inventory Pouch]

(Storage Space) (F-Class)

(☆ Primitive I)

Increases your [Inventory] skill by 5 Rarity Tiers while equipped, enhancing the available storage space.

“Woah, Inventory space? Like the bigger-on-the-inside coffers?” Sam got thoroughly excited over the possibility of having the equivalent of one of those magical coffers on his person at all times.

However, it was just a theory. It might not actually be that incredible. It did suggest that he had an Inventory without the pouch, which would be amazing.

Until Sam could verify it, he wasn’t about to get his hopes up. Though it would be insanely nice to be able to carry things around without looking like he was going hiking through the mountains.

Komachi batted the pouch with a paw, then, without further warning, climbed inside. Considering she was physically larger

than the whole pouch, apparently this item worked very similar to the coffers.

Silence followed.

She flew out, thoroughly spooked and yowling her head off.

“Hey, what happened?” Sam cried, scooping her up and tucking her under one arm like she liked it.

She shivered. “It’s *bad* in there!”

“Then don’t go in there,” Sam told her, knowing that she would forget in a few moments and probably get lost in some spacetime-bending pouch.

Sam, unsure how to go about “equipping” the pouch, gently pressed it to the waistband of his board shorts. When he took his hand away, the pouch stayed in place as if stuck.

“Works for me,” he said to himself. “Let’s see what else we’ve got here.”

[Gear Tool Set]

(Item) (F-Class)

(★ Common II)

A set of various tools used by many Jobs to restore and maintain equipment, from armor to armaments. Intended to service a broad range of gear, these tools specialize in no particular type of equipment.

Requires: [Basic Maintenance]

Sam sifted through the bulky toolbox full of neatly organized hammers, chisels, whetstones, pliers, tins of waxes, and more. The description really hadn’t been lying. It had everything he could ever need to maintain just about any piece of equipment he could think of.

And several that he probably couldn't.

All the tools looked to be in exceptionally good condition, which made sense since this was the first item he'd seen that was not Primitive rarity.

The next items he pulled out were simple cotton spun clothes, a pair of half-gloves, and a pair of mid top leather boots. None of them were anything to write home about.

They had no stats, were all Primitive rarity, and even the description just called them "basic" in every way, shape, and form. But at least he wouldn't be nearly naked, which was good.

The clothes were "equipped" no differently than any other article of clothing. He simply put them on, and that was it. His [Initiate Inventory Pouch] even phased through his clothes until it hung at the hip of his new pants.

Well, there goes my idea about being able to conceal my Inventory, Sam thought.

Speaking of inventory, Sam uncinched the drawstrings on the pouch and put the [Gear Tool Set] inside. At first, he was sure it wasn't going to fit. It was larger than the opening of the pouch, after all.

However, he hardly had to force it, as the opening widened easily to accommodate the toolbox.

Sam watched as it dropped into the space beyond, curious just how big it was and how much "5 Rarity Tiers" enhanced it. For now, he was fully clothed and with only one item remaining for him to inspect.

This, he had saved for last.

[Dull Claymore]

(Heavy Greatsword) (F-Class)

(☆ Primitive IV)

Enhancements

Slashing Damage II | Swing Speed II

A two-handed greatsword forged from incredibly dense blackiron ore. Though its edge is dulled, this weapon's metal remains considerably strong, dealing additional damage in the hands of one skilled in leveraging a heavy weapon.

While this greatsword weighs more than most of its counterparts, this claymore has quicker swing speed accompanying its lengthy reach.

Requires: [Heavy Weapon Handling]

Sam's heart sank as he read the description. "What? How can it give me a weapon that I can't use? I only have *one* trait!"