UnFamiliar

Story by Bucking Nonsense, Jump by Aehriman

Rilmgaard: a realm perpetually on the brink of ruin. As social changes bring greater and greater rights and wealth to the common man, a conservative faction of the nobility digs in their heels harder and harder. A decade after the Academy City firebug destroyed the homes and businesses of the burgeoning middle class, five years after a riot inspired when a baron proposed reviving the (probably entirely fictional) practice of *droit du seigneur* to 'keep the dirtborn in their place' and was lynched, Lily Arvensdaughter is the first commoner to attend the prestigious Royal Academy of Sorcerous Sciences, having her name picked from a hat by the king for a pilot program. After six months of determined bullying by the students and faculty, Lily attempts to hang herself when paired with her biggest bully and talented fire mage Crassus for the end-of-semester combat magic tournament.

Her suicide is interrupted by Rine, an arch-lich sealed outside the universe and consequentially, the sole survivor of a magical civilization eons more advanced. For months he has sensed Lily's distress and tried to get her attention, only in this last extreme was he able to act. Together they form a familiar pact, in exchange for Rine's tutelage to crush the tournament and achieve all Lily's goals, she promises to gain the strength and skill needed to one day free him.

Meanwhile, various forces gather behind the scenes. The king is aware his instructions are being flouted in the halls of the Royal Academy, and is Not Happy. The sinister

Stoneclutch, existing somewhere at the intersection of organized crime and a cult, has grand designs for the tournament. Rine is making independent moves, and more.

Have 1,000 mana points (mp) to make it through the chaos to come.

RACE, AGE, SEX, ETC.

Change any of these to suit yourself.

ORIGINS

Who will you be? Choose one.

Student: You are a student at RASS, perhaps a second commoner like Lily, or a more traditionally noble student. Either way, big changes are coming to the school in just a few days.

Sage (-200 mp) You are an archmage from the distant past, bound outside the universe, a helpless observer to the rhythms of history. At least, until very recently.

Noble: You were born to rule, with rights and privileges unimaginable to commoners, and at least theoretically a duty to your people.

Witch: Where a wizard must train their inner strength, witches and warlocks (male witches) instead gain power through a pact, either with spirits, hostile eldritch forces, sometimes even cursed items. They are adept at curses and the sowing of misery for their masters, though each contract is highly specific. A witch (or warlock!) can achieve unusual powers undreamt of by any modern wizard, but there's always a price…

Stoneclutch: A criminal syndicate and a cult that has made a god and chief virtue of greed, that sees all things as transactional. The favorite activity of the Stoneclutch is destabilizing societies, providing endless cover for theft and opportunities to deal weapons and information to all sides. Most of their combat arm and leadership are warlocks or vampires.

Monster: You aren't a human at all, but a creature generated in a labyrinth, as an obstacle for adventurers. But perhaps you can be a great deal more than that.

Knight: You're a champion of the kingdom, an acclaimed chivalric soldier. All too often in these degenerate days, a knight is just an armored thug, but you hail from a nobler tradition of selfless and courageous service.

FRIENDS

Lily Arvensdaughter (-50 mp) The protagonist, a teenage girl, a little insecure, bullied to the point of attempting suicide. Is a tremendously sweet and forgiving person, and a sharp one, a lawyer's daughter. One to watch even without her mentor factored in.

Alice (-50 mp) Another girl bullied at the same school, to the point where she was cast into a hole to die. She made a pact with a cursed harp to murder her tormentors and now wants to take out her rage on the world. Teenagers, so dramatic.

Madeline (-50 mp) One of the few noble students at RASS to be an actually good person, fairly unremarkable in ability, but a good friend.

Crassus (-50 mp) A supposed fire magic prodigy, a bully with a huge chip on his shoulder and no problem cold-cocking a girl even in his high school years. But he's also a deeply insecure boy, scion of a minor house and not in line to inherit, magic is all he

has. When Lily prevents him from blowing himself up, he takes a long hard look and confesses his many crimes.

MadLad (-50 mp) Once a king of beggars, who vanquished ten knights, now squire to the most beloved knight in the Realm, MadLad is a master of self-buffing magic and crazy suicidally dangerous stunts.

Horatio de Ivenmar (-50 mp) The Laughing Knight, both royal jester and one of the most decorated knights in the realm. Has a very level head and isn't too stuck up on himself.

Other (-100 mp) Anyone else we missed you feel like recruiting? Pick them here.

Crew (-100 mp) Import as many Companions as you like with 800 mp of their own. Companions cannot earn more mp through drawbacks.

Rine Vect Nol Karmaskor (-200 mp) A failed attempt to make a superman in a far more refined magical age, but a magical prodigy, Rine dedicated his life to helping the victims of magical tinkering and when he became too sickly, became a lich so he could continue. Specifically, he cast bones of adamant, stuffed his phylactery and a forty-thousand year mana reactor into his now virtually indestructible skull. As one of the three Celestial Sages, Rine was revered as a god for his power and wisdom, but when he left to pursue the mystery of why magical civilizations rise and fall, he was too late to prevent his dear friends from becoming monsters. He destroyed them both, and sat and pondered for days until mages bound him outside the universe. If you can free him, he will be intensely grateful, and he always did love to explore new frontiers.

SKILLS

Specialization (-100 mp, first free Student) These days pretty much all wizards specialize in a narrow range of spells. What they don't understand is that this is because miscasts clog the mana channels, making it harder and harder to use spells of a particular type. Still, that does mean one or two areas they've extensively practiced and never made significant mistakes in. You have one such area, where you learn twice as fast and your spells are twice as powerful. This may be taken multiple times, but future purchases are discounted.

Dragon-Draining (-200 mp, discount Student) Nothing about dragons makes biological sense. Not their flight, their entire existence as an extended middle finger to square-cube law, breathing fire or being sapient and highly intelligent with a brain size and neural architecture comparable to an iguana. The only reason dragons are a thing is because they evolved an ability to drain mana from their surroundings to support their impossible biology, and it turns out that's a trick wizards can learn. It's tricky to split your focus, but if you're careful, you can regain mana roughly as fast as you use it, while denying easy passive mana regeneration to your enemies.

Winterborne (-400 mp, discount Student) Perhaps the spirit of solstice is in you, but in any case you've decided the wizard you want to be is one that helps people simply because they need it, and doesn't fuss over what people deserve. This commitment to doing good grants you phenomenal empathy and perspective, and inspires others who receive your mercy. If someone can be redeemed, you can do it, and in a fraction of the time it would take anyone else.

Apt Pupil (-600 mp, discount Student) Even with a masterful teacher, it is no small thing to cram over three years of magical training into three days. You can do this, and more, mastering powerful and long lost skills in hours or days, finding teachers who can share ancient secrets.

Anyone Can Be A Wizard (-100 mp, free **Sage**) Well, not everyone has the aptitude and imagination, the mental discipline. But anyone can eventually be taught, and you are a skilled, patient and above all, a fun instructor, easily able to relate complex material through simple analogies and amusing anecdotes that will live in your students' memories forever.

Outside Perspective (-200 mp, discount **Sage**) From a position outside reality, you can perceive any point in space, as many as you can reasonably multitask with. Only the greatest mages, most in tune with the universe, could hope to notice or prevent your spying.

Modular System (-400 mp, discount **Sage**) One of the greatest things about the magic system in this world is how modular it is. Once you know how to create distinct magic types, a Dragon's Breath spell can become ice, or sunlight. You can make a shield of healing energy that regenerates all within. You are the master of such substitutions of form and effect, and can apply them to any magic you use.

Celestial Sage (-600 mp, discount **Sage**) Technological civilizations have their own issues, but the cycle of magical civilizations is that all this power is purely *personal.* Sooner or later, there arise immortals with power and abilities indistinguishable from gods, and when they inevitably come into conflict, they destroy each other and civilization, starting the cycle anew. You are a survivor of one such age, one of the deified. The most powerful and complex of magics are all effortless to you, in any system in which you are capable. The ironclad laws of magic are more like guidelines you can brute force through the moment you care to expend any significant effort.

Privilege (-100 mp, free **Noble**) You're a big deal! A VIP! People can tell this, and tend to treat your opinions and comfort as important. Can be toggled off.

Treachery & Deceit (-200 mp, discount **Noble**) The favorite board/card game of the nobility, and also a way of life for them. In the game each player is given hidden objectives and can form alliances or raid each other for supplies, all while trying to backstab each other. You are a master at concealing your intentions and goals, insinuating yourself into people's confidence, whether to genuinely help or throw them under the carriage.

Perspective (-400 mp, discount **Noble**) Every noble is vastly outnumbered by the lower classes surrounding them, the masses that are actually affected by each decision they make. You never lose that connection to the little guy, the understanding of what it's like to live without power in a world others have made for their benefit. May it serve you well.

Politics (-600 mp, discount **Noble**) Politics. One of the most dangerous games there is. You are an absolute master of it, able to weave through governments, flatter people, and generally figure out what levers you need to pull to make someone dance on your strings, and exactly how far the rules can be pushed. Also comes with fine accounting skills and unrelated "accounting" skills, which may prove useful for bri- I mean, uh, gifts. Yes. Gifts.

Curses (-100 mp, free **Witch**) You are great at indirect magic that slowly weakens, depresses or undermines people, getting around most magical defenses which are geared towards a more straightforward assault.

Midnight Witch (-200 mp, discount **Witch**) As a creature of darkness, it shouldn't surprise that your powers are five times stronger in the absence of the sun, or double that at the witching hour.

Ironclad Contracts (-400 mp, discount **Witch**) Like a certain student you might have dearly wanted to know once, you are a master at making ironclad, absolute contracts to prevent any abuse of yourself or your good intentions.

Abuser (-600 mp, discount **Witch**) Or perhaps, like Alice, it was never the cursed item or entity providing your power that people needed to worry about. You have the indomitable sense of will and character to turn any tie to your advantage, even the normally subservient witches' bond. In no time at all, it will be you, not they, calling the shots.

Blood From A Stone (-100 mp, free **Stoneclutch**) the name Stoneclutch comes from their response to being told you can't squeeze blood from a stone, "you wanna bet?" You can always find a way to turn a fantastic profit, whether that means building on a swamp or burning that black funk that sometimes seeps up from the ground.

Cruelty (-200 mp, discount **Stoneclutch**) The demon kings are said to stand and watch in envy the pain the Master of the Stoneclutch can inflict when provoked. You can inflict suffering, physical, mental and emotional, beyond bearing. You understand well that the best way to hurt someone is to offer them hope for reprieve, and snatch it away.

Master Vampire (-400 mp, discount **Stoneclutch**) The Stoneclutch are the world's foremost employers of warlocks and vampires. You in particular have spent enough time and blood to become a master vampire, a very powerful member of the species with just about every power traditionally ascribed to the breed, and greatly reduced weaknesses.

Twisty-Turny Mind (-600 mp, discount **Stoneclutch**) Any spy placed in the Stoneclutch becomes a double agent and source of disinformation. Whether by choice or simply being identified. The organization runs rings around all the kingdoms and their very competent intelligence services. You are likewise a master of planning, both improvising and laying out the groundwork, so that you can be fairly certain which way

any known quantity will jump in a given situation, and play the I-know-that-you-know game forever. Of course, even the best laid plans can be upset by the intrusion of a new element no one could have predicted, which is where that improv skill comes in handy for salvaging something from any disaster.

Beneath Notice (-100 mp, free **Monster**) Just a wretchling, they'll say. Probably not carrying any loot or worth any experience. You're great at being underestimated, or hiding your true nature as a monster.

Easy on the Eyes (-200 mp, discount **Monster**) Turns out the final form of wretchlings looks an awful lot like a buxom elf-maiden. Who knew? You always present as an extremely attractive member of an inoffensive species, the better to move around.

Loot (-400 mp, discount **Monster**) Loot drops are the major reason people go into dungeons, and as a special monster, you find all the best loot. Something between luck and instinct leads you to lost treasures and useful trinkets.

Boss Monster (-600 mp, discount **Monster**) You're not just any monster, you're the kind that eats whole raid parties for breakfast. You have extremely high health, regeneration, and at least one special attack or ability that is extremely frustrating for your enemies.

Horse and Spear (-100 mp, free **Knight**) You have received a knightly education, and as such are a master rider and have above average skills in poking holes in people.

Courtly Manners (-200 mp, discount **Knight**) Once, knights proved their worth by slaying monsters and doing impossible labors. There are less of all of these to go around now, so most earn their knighthood as a bodyguard to politically sensitive young nobles. You know how to blend in with any level of society, to not give offense. You also have a keen instinct for traps and ambushes, whether physical or conversational.

Master at Arms (-400 mp, discount **Knight**) A mounted knight is usually considered the worth of five men-at-arms in battle. With you, it's more like ten. Your skills in all forms of weaponry enable you to fight at ten to one odds, with peer opponents, and emerge victorious.

Buffs (-600 mp, discount **Knight**) The magics that enhance the body are poorly understood in Rilmgaard and surrounding areas. Mostly those who use them do so instinctively. Your speed, strength and durability can all be enhanced, to the point where you might fight fifty men unaided, even just flailing about. If married to actual skill, you could become a one-man army.

TREASURES

Healing Potion (-50/100/200 mp) A potion that heals wounds, replenished daily. Minor potion for small injuries or stabilizing major ones for 50 mp, medium for a hundred, major potions that cure anything short of death for 200 mp.

Mana Crystals (-50/100/200 mp) Solidified mana, to the point it self-regenerates. For 50 mp, these are small crystals such as are often used by students. 100 cp for medium, 200 for large, containing more mana than most mages.

Calorie Ring (-50 mp) A ring used in cycling, a basic exercise for cleaning and growing magical channels. What's special about this ring is that by cycling mana through it, you burn calories and fat. Try not to overuse.

Money (-50 mp) You have a healthy allowance, equivalent to that of a count's son, all without lifting a finger. This can be taken multiple times to double the money each.

Title (-50 mp) Congrats, you're a noble! Even if a noble's child, this grants you a fiefdom of your own, equivalent to a Baron or landed knight. This can be taken multiple times to bump you a rank up the peerage.

Security & Summoning Charms (-50 mp) Simple but powerful spells, one to prevent anyone but you and anyone you specifically authorize from using Items, and one to let you summon them to your hand. This is not a specific Item, but an addition you can make to any other ones.

Equip Amulet (-100 mp) A small charm that can link to items in prearranged "sets." Afterwards, you just need to grip it and say the set, like "battle dress" or "formal wear" and the specified arms, armor, clothes, jewelry etc will teleport onto your person, swapping out your existing clothes and gear if need be.

Ring of Fire Absorption (-100 mp) Once given to careless children to prevent burns, now a priceless treasure, this ring renders the wearer completely impervious to harm by fire.

Spectacles of True-Seeing (-100 mp) Pretty much what it sounds like, eyeglasses that reveal the invisible and pierce all illusion.

Trinkets (-100 mp) A pair of talismans, one vibrates when a lie is spoken, the other when magic is used. Try not to mix them up.

Staff of Power (-200 mp) A staff from the previous age of magic, an elaborate mythril rod six feet in height, topped with a blue mana gem in a clear orb which cannot be rated by the modern system. Really, the heart is the gem, the rest are just mechanisms to allow a person to safely handle and tap the mana equivalent of a star. With this the question is never if you have the mana for a feat, but if you can use it.

Wand of the Domination (-200 mp) A wand of ebony material, with a blue gem at the tip and a mythril dragon design. If Staves are extraordinary power sources, wands are used to make magic more precise and energy efficient. This one allows workings on the submolecular level.

Robes of the Archmage (-200 mp) The ancient uniform of the "Tank Wizard." Blue robes with mantle, blue slippers, blue gloves, blue pointy wizard's hat, and a collar so high that with the hat on only an eyeslit is visible. Enchanted with every protective magic under the sun, a scale mail of shields thirty layers deep and resistant materials aside. Somewhat ironically, real archmages can provide much better protection, railguns are still a problem with the robes on.

Beacon of Evocation (-300 mp) Before there was summoning, there was evocation, the art of *inviting* spirits for a friendly chat, for which you need one of these magic candles. There is a ritual component, overlapping circles of salt and sand defining a space for the participants, including one they can interact in. Best if you name your subject, if not exactly, by the best description you can. The candle will go out and dismiss your interlocutor the moment one of you tries to deceive or harm the other.

Labyrinth (-1,000 mp) Your very own labyrinth, or dungeon as they were called back in the day. A vast and occasionally shifting maze of traps, treasure and monsters. More to the point, you have a key to an express elevator to the bottom and a hidden control chamber which allows you to reconfigure things on the fly. Of course, for that you need a magical matter-fabricator capable of churning out legendary magical items in job lots, and even creating life to serve you. Try not to go too mad with power, alright?

COMPLICATIONS

Eternal Hiatus (+ 0 mp) If you want, you can bail after the story runs out, right about the end of the second tournament match, three days after Lily meets Rine.

Supplement (+0 mp) Or give this place a miss entirely, and take the benefits someplace else for your Jump(s). Just remember, there's no outrunning drawbacks.

Early Days (+100 mp) You start ten years earlier, when Academy City was being terrorized by an ultraconservative arsonist.

Low Status (+100 mp) You might be a commoner, or a notorious scoundrel. But you have a certain reputation that makes people think it's okay to dismiss or harm you.

Phantom Injuries (+100 mp) One problem with miraculous healing magic, your body expects that gash or broken bone to hurt for a lot longer. So people sometimes get the sensation of a phantom pain, a hurt that should be there. You are particularly susceptible to this.

Scarred (+100 mp) You have been horrifically scarred, perhaps by fire, or a knight raking your face with a spur. You are highly distinctive.

One Eye (+100/200 mp) Depth perception is going to be something of an issue for you. This can be taken twice to render you blind.

Blood From A Stone (+200 mp) The master of Stoneclutch has taken a personal, hostile interest in you. This could be particularly perilous if you are already a member.

No Treasures (+200 mp) Your Warehouse, and any Items from previous Jumps, are barred from you.

Year of Revolutions (+200 mp) Either the liberal or conservative factions in Rilmgaard regard you as a disgusting traitor and breathing example of all that's wrong in the world. Expect to be harassed, harangued and targeted by the more zealous members.

Clogged Channels (+200/300 mp) Miscasting spells causing lingering energies to clog up the channels for that specific magic type, restricting you. The fix is easy, cycling your energy by releasing and absorbing it constantly, but you'll need to do a lot of it before you can learn magic outside one or two types. For an extra hundred mp (300 total) your channels are as bad as Crassus'. It will take months to fix and you're maybe a dozen miscasts away from crippling your art entirely.

Pride (+300 mp) You can't resist bragging and showing off, can't keep an ace up your sleeve to save your life. People have a really good idea what you can do and even why. Expect the Jumpchain to be a subject of fascination for wizards.

Power Lockout (+300 mp) Most of your power is denied to you, any perks or abilities from outside of this Jump.



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Move On

Notes: *If you're reading this probably have a computer and can read the original story* HERE.